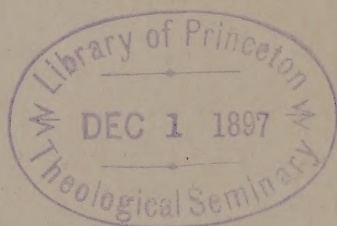


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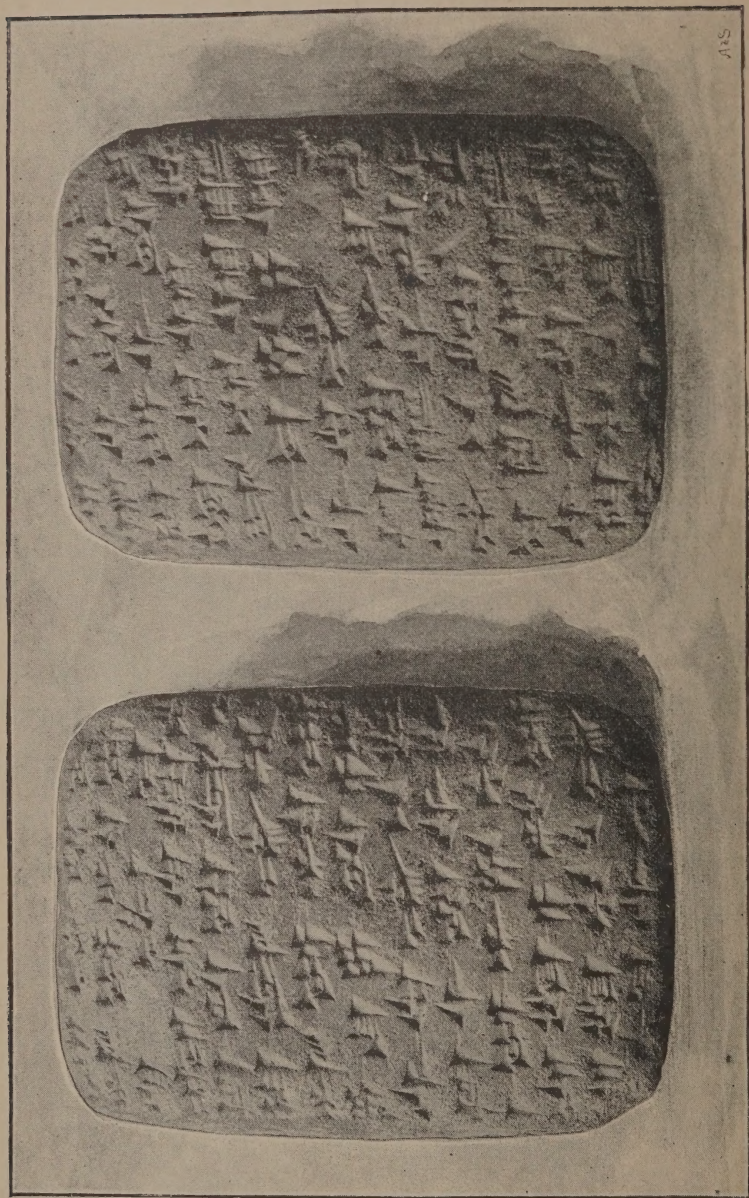
NEW LIGHT

ON THE

BIBLE AND THE HOLY LAND

OBVERSE.

REVERSE.



TABLET FOUND AT TELL EL-AMARNA.—LETTER FROM MILKILI TO THE KING OF EGYPT.

(See page 227.)

New Light
ON THE
Bible and the Holy Land

BEING

*An Account of some Recent Discoveries in
the East*

BY

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ILLUSTRATED

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED

LONDON, PARIS & MELBOURNE

1892

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PREFACE.

THE more the records of Assyria and Babylonia are studied, the more light they must throw on the history of the neighbouring nation of Israel. The small but fertile and wealthy district on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, intervening between the shores of Egypt and the harbours of Tyre and Sidon, was alternately, in the course of its history, overrun by the powerful nations which dwelt on each side of it: by the armies of the Nile, or by the warriors of the Tigris and Euphrates. On this account Syria, Samaria, and Judah are frequently mentioned in the written monuments of Nineveh and Babylon; and, on the other hand, the Hebrew literature teems with allusions to these great cities. But there was a closer connection than this between the races of Western and Eastern Syria, if we may once use the latter name in the wide sense sometimes given to it by ancient authors. The Hebrews originally proceeded from the plains of Chaldæa, according to the statements of their own historians; and the valley of the Euphrates was the cradle of their race. They were, therefore, akin to the Babylonians in speech, in ideas, and in social organisation; and a study of the language,

the literature, and the archæology of the one nation must further the understanding of the phenomena presented by the history of the other.

After the cuneiform inscriptions were first deciphered, it soon became apparent that the historical narratives of the Bible would receive much elucidation from these new sources. Records of the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs who attacked or carried captive the nations of Israel and Judah were found. On certain clay cylinders, Sennacherib was discovered to have left us a brief account of his war with Hezekiah. The name of Sargon, always a puzzle to commentators, who had tried to identify him with Tiglath-Pileser or Shalmaneser, was found to be that of a powerful monarch who was the father of Sennacherib, and who invaded Syria, according to the native records, as well as according to the prophet Isaiah. In the Assyrian chronicles of Tiglath-Pileser III., this prince alludes to the kings of Israel and Judah, whom he vanquished or who paid him tribute: to Menahem, to Pekah, to Hosea, and to Azariah; and only recently it has been found that Pul was the name given by the Babylonians, as well as by the author of the Second Book of Kings in certain passages, to the same Tiglath-Pileser III. Moreover, an Assyrian monument, known as the Black Obelisk of Nimroud, was found to exhibit the name of Jehu, who paid tribute to Shalmaneser II. Besides these and many other illustrations or confirmations of the history of the people of Israel contained in the Hebrew books,

documents were discovered which were compared with the primeval narratives of the Book of Genesis; especially that relating the story of the Flood, translated and published by George Smith, in 1872. The principal points of comparison between the cuneiform inscriptions and the Bible found up to a certain date, have been collected by Professor Schrader in his work on "The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament," afterwards translated into English.

But Assyriology is a progressive science. Not only does the material already brought to light require the study of many years before its philological and historical difficulties can be mastered; but there is also a constant addition of new material, the result of fresh excavations on the ancient sites of Mesopotamia and Chaldæa. During the last few years the Americans and Germans have been conducting researches among the mounds that mark the place of former cities, but the difficulties placed in the way are so great that it is only occasionally that success has attended these efforts. If only the numerous ruins of Assyria and Babylonia could be fully and systematically laid bare, a work of enormous labour and expense, requiring the co-operation of the Turkish Government, it is certain that the result would richly repay the undertaking, in spite of the destruction that has been wrought upon the ancient monuments by the natives. Even now the mounds of Nineveh, after the labours of Sir H. Layard and Mr. Rassam, which produced such marvellous fruit, must conceal immense treasures; while the ruins of Babylon can only have

yielded a very small part of their hidden wealth. Besides the capitals, there were formerly flourishing cities scattered over the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, and still represented by the numerous artificial hills that dot the plains and await excavation.

In consequence of the constant accessions to our knowledge which follow the arrival of new materials and the interpretation of materials already acquired, every decade and even every year must throw new light, if only a few dim rays, on some corner of the vast field of Biblical research. Thus, during the last ten years the study of the monuments discovered by M. de Sarzec have already taught us something about the earliest civilization of the district from whence Abraham, according to the Book of Genesis, migrated to the land of Canaan: about the state of the arts, and incidentally about the religious and political condition of that region at a very remote period. The subsequent excavations of M. Dieulafoy have added much to our knowledge of the architecture of the Achæmenian period in Persia, and of the minor arts which accompany that principal branch of art; at the same time the reconstruction, which is now possible, of the dwelling of Xerxes and Artaxerxes, the remains of which have been laid bare by the French expedition, illustrates those passages in the Bible which refer to "Shushan the palace," and is of much general interest on that account.

But the principal discovery of the last few years has undoubtedly been that of the Tell el-Amarna tablets. These documents create a new chapter of history; they

tell us for the first time what was the condition of Syria during the period immediately preceding the Exodus of the Israelites, when the Canaanite was still in the land; for the indications derived from Egyptian sources were too scanty to afford a clear idea of the state of Western Asia under the supremacy of the Pharaohs.

Professor Sayce was the first to detect the name of Jerusalem on one of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, which were subsequently found to include half a dozen letters, written by the representative of the Egyptian power in that city to his suzerain. According to Josephus, Jerusalem was founded, in the year B.C. 2107, by Melchisedech, whom the historian calls a "prince of the Canaanites;" but without accepting this date, we may be sure that when the kings of the eighteenth dynasty added Jerusalem to the list of tributary towns, she must already have been for several centuries in existence. Nevertheless, this was still the period of the childhood of Jerusalem, alluded to by the prophet Ezekiel, who reminds the city of her early history:—"Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite."

According to the letters found at Tell el-Amarna, the Hittites and the Amorites were still in possession of the country around Jerusalem, although they were, from time to time reduced by their powerful neighbours from the Nile into a state of partial submission, and obliged to pay tribute to the Pharaoh.

It is evident, from the documents of which we are speaking, that even the payment of tribute and the recognition of the supremacy of Egypt was not long endured without resistance by the turbulent tribes of Canaan. The yoke placed upon their necks by the earlier kings of the eighteenth dynasty seems to have been thrown off under the later monarchs of the same line; and the way was made ready for the conquest of the Israelites, who found no power able to restrain their march through the country, and no mighty suzerain to whom appeal could be made for help by the vanquished inhabitants. Even the letters from Tell el-Amarna show us that such appeals were made in vain, under similar circumstances, to Amenophis IV., and that in his reign the Hittites and other tribes overran the Egyptian possessions without much resistance.

The letters from various princes of Western Asia found at Tell el-Amarna disclose a state of advanced civilization in that region, and show the great wealth and luxury of the Courts at that early period. The art of working in metals, in particular, appears already to have arrived at a high degree of perfection. The commercial intercourse of the kingdoms of Western Asia with one another, and with the valley of the Nile, is proved to have reached a state of much activity. We hear of the merchants of the King of Babylon, who frequently passed through the land of Canaan on their way to Egypt, just as the merchants of Solomon carried on their traffic with the neighbouring centres of trade. After this there is no reason to be surprised when we

find proofs of trade between Babylon and Canaan at the time of the Israelitish invasion: the Babylonish garment, dipped in the scarlet dye for which the land of Shinar was famous, had been sold at Jericho by a merchant from the Euphrates, passing through the land as his fellows had done for many years—perhaps ever since the conquests of Thothmes I. had begun to bring the Egyptian kings into close relations with the regions of Mesopotamia.

Babylon was, throughout her history, a great commercial centre. She was, as Ezekiel says, a city of merchants, situated in a land of traffic. In the Tell el-Amarna tablets we see her exchanging her wares with the Egyptians in return for the gold which the mines of Eastern Africa poured into the valley of the Nile, until it became “like dust” in that region, and was sought for from thence by all the most civilised monarchs of the time.

The geographical results of the Tell el-Amarna tablets are already important. We acquire information from them concerning many cities and countries, well known in later times, but of which the period to which our documents belong had hitherto yielded no memorial. Further study will, perhaps, lead to the identification of some names which occur here, but which are not yet certainly connected with names known to us from other sources. Such is the land of Mitâni, a powerful and highly cultivated State, the king of which writes on terms of equality to the Pharaoh, who on his side shows his friendship by allying himself

with the reigning family through marriage with more than one of its daughters; and such, again, is the land of Alashiya, productive of copper, and sending its ships and merchants to the mouths of the Nile. All we know of the position of these countries is that the former lay in or near the region of Mesopotamia, and that the latter was called in Egyptian Alesa, and mentioned together with cities or States of Syria.

The principal authorities for the statements contained in the following pages must now be given. M. de Sarzec's discoveries are described in *Découvertes en Chaldée*, which is partly his own work and partly that of M. L. Heuzey, the keeper of the Oriental Department of the Louvre; the book also includes some translations of the inscriptions by the late M. Amiaud, who published other work of the same sort in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*. The researches of M. Dieulafoy are expounded in his work entitled *L'Acropole de Suse*; and a narrative of the expedition is given by Madame Dieulafoy in *À Suse, Journal des Fouilles*. The tablets from Tell el-Amarna at Berlin and at Gizeh have been published, in the text only, by Drs. Winckler and Abel: the title of their work is *Der Thontafelfund von el-Amarna*. Translations of some of the texts given to the world in the last-named work have been issued by Professor Sayce, Dr. Winckler, Dr. Zimmern, and others. The Tell el-Amarna tablets at the British Museum were published last spring by the Trustees; the edition of the texts is the work of Dr. Bezold, and the introduction and summary are the joint

production of Dr. Bezold and Dr. Budge. In the last-named portions of the book translations of many passages are to be found, besides paraphrases which are almost equivalent to translations. A bibliography is also appended. The Tell el-Amarna tablets in the possession of M. Bouriant, and those at Gizeh, were published in a transcription and translation by Professor Sayce in the *Proceedings of the Society for Biblical Archaeology* of 1888. The only independent translations from cuneiform inscriptions in the present work are some passages of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, and some contracts of the time of Evil-Merodach and Neriglissar, translated from the texts published by the author. A collection of the principal historical texts of Assyria and Babylonia has recently been edited, in the form of a transcription and translation, by Professor Schrader of Berlin, and is the work of the leading Assyriologists of Germany. Our knowledge of the astronomy of the Babylonians is now to be derived from the work of Father Strassmaier, S.J., and Father Epping, S.J., entitled *Astronomisches aus Babylon*; the same authors have published articles on the subject in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* and other periodicals. Before these works, the writings of Professor Sayce and Professor Oppert were all that we had to depend upon; the former published an article on *The Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians* in the *Transactions of the Society for Biblical Archaeology*, 1874. A corpus of Babylonian contracts, or legal deeds, from the time of Nabopolassar to that of Darius Hystaspis, has been published by

Father Strassmaier, who has made these documents for the first time available to students. Other works are referred to in foot-notes.

The following chapters have been written with the view of presenting a brief account of the discoveries, bearing upon the history related in the Bible, which have been made during the last ten or twelve years, and of doing this in a simple form, omitting all matters that do not appear to be of general interest. Some of these discoveries are already well known through the works of Sir H. Rawlinson, of Canon Rawlinson, of Professor Sayce, and of others. This is especially the case with regard to Chapters XII. and XIII. It is important, however, to see at a glance how many illustrations of the Bible from contemporary sources have been found during the last few years, and how much hope this may arouse in us of many more illustrations which may be given by further study and further excavations.

The history of the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions here given, is, of course, intended not for philologists, but for ordinary readers, who may sometimes be under misapprehensions as to the nature of the processes through which the clay tablets have been read and interpreted. Details intelligible only to scholars have therefore been omitted; and it has also been impossible to exhibit the innumerable confirmations, which have come in from all sides, of the correctness of the decipherments. The intention has been to indicate in some measure the methods followed by Assyriologists, so far as they are intelligible to the

laity. It is necessary to remind the latter, however, that while the general results of Assyrian and Babylonian research are now placed beyond a doubt, there is still much to be done before either the grammar or the dictionary can be completed; and that there may still be much uncertainty with regard to the interpretation of particular words or particular passages.

CONTENTS.

Part I.

HISTORY OF THE DECIPHERMENT OF THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE RUIN OF NINEVEH AND BABYLON.

	PAGE
Sherley's impressions of Ruins of Babylon and Nineveh—History of these Cities since the time when they ceased to be Independent Capitals—Allusions of Classical Authors—Of Syrian and Mahometan Writers—European Travellers from Benjamin of Tudela to the present day—Interest aroused by inscriptions found among Ruins—How were they to be deciphered?	1

CHAPTER II.

THE PALACES OF PERSEPOLIS.

Legend of Jemsheed, to whom the Natives ascribe the Ruins—Description of Palaces—Persepolis in Classical Authors—Other Persian legends relating to the Ruins—European Travellers—Barbaro—Gouvea—Silva y Figueroa—Sir T. Herbert and others—Chardin—De Bruin—Niebuhr—Results of their Researches	50
---	----

CHAPTER III.

DECIPHERMENT OF THE OLD PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

Attempt on part of Natives to decipher Cuneiform Characters—First notice of inscriptions at Persepolis by Antonio de Gouvea—Sir Thomas Herbert's account of them—Hyde's view that they were simply ornamental designs—Similar view held subsequently by Samuel Witte—Resemblance of cuneiform characters to Chinese noticed by Kaempfer, Von Murr, and Raspe—Comparison of the characters with Runic writing by Court de Gebelin, Celsius, and Bock—Publication of the Caylus Vase—Copies of Persepolitan inscriptions published by Kaempfer, Chardin, De Bruin, and, above all, by Niebuhr—First	
---	--

interpretation of Zend by Anquetil-Duperron—With help of Zend, Tychsen and Münter attempt decipherment of Persepolitan inscriptions—Grotefend at last successful in decipherment—De Sacy's interpretation of Sassanian inscriptions—Work of decipherment carried on by Saint-Martin, Rask, Lassen, Burnouf, Rawlinson, and others . . .	PAGE 79
---	------------

CHAPTER IV.

THE DECIPHERMENT OF THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

First inscriptions found at Babylon—Bricks procured by the East India Company from the ruins—The <i>Caillou Michaux</i> —First attempts at decipherment—Lichtenstein—Grotefend—Botta's excavations at Khorsabad—Layard's excavations at Nimroud and Kouyunjik—Decipherment—Botta—De Saulcy—Hincks—Rawlinson—Oppert—Criticism of Ewald and Renan—Progress of Assyriology—Various aids to decipherment and interpretation	105
---	-----

Part II.

RECENT DISCOVERIES.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERIES AT TELLO.

Date of invention of writing among Semitic peoples—Formerly doubted whether writing was invented before Moses—Discovery of inscriptions at Ur—Civilization of Chaldæa before Abraham—Rassam's excavations at Sippara—M. de Sarzec excavates mounds of Tello—Physical characters of the regions of Southern Babylonia—Marshes—Abundance of palm-trees—Purchase by French Government of antiquities from Tello—Their great interest—Complete and authentic chronological records possessed by the Babylonians—Care with which these records were preserved—Inscriptions of Ramman-Nirari I., Tiglath-Pileser I., Sardanapalus, Nabonidus—Last-named king provides us with dates of Sargon I. and Naram-Sin—Vase of latter found at Tello—Sculptures of different dates found at Tello—"Eagle and Lion Tablet"—"Vulture-Stela"—Governors of Lagash (Tello)—Description of their palace—Statues of Gudea—Their costume—Gudea as architect—Inscriptions upon the statues	130
---	-----

CHAPTER VI.

THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS.

Discovery of the Tablets—Their Date—The Remains at Tell el-Amarna—Character of the Tablets—The Epistolary style of the period—Adulation of the Pharaoh—Use of the Babylonian Script and Language throughout Western Asia—Babylonian conquests in Syria—Egyptian conquest of Syria during the rule of the Eighteenth Dynasty	163
---	-----

CHAPTER VII.

THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS (*continued*)—LETTERS FROM MESOPOTAMIAN PRINCES TO THE KINGS OF EGYPT.

	PAGE
Purposes with which Mesopotamian princes sent letters to Egyptian kings—Intermarriage of royal family of Egypt with those of Mesopotamian States—Aunt, sister, and daughter of Tushratta, king of Mitâni, married to Amenophis III. of Egypt—Dowries of these princesses—Introduction of worship of Ishtar, or Ashtoreth, from Mesopotamia into Egypt—Mention of Gilu-khipa, Tushratta's sister, on Egyptian scarabæus—Letter of Tushratta referring to rebellion in his own country and to war with the Hittites—Letter from Amenophis III. to the king of Babylon, referring to his sister who was married to the Pharaoh—History of Babylon at this period—The trade of this time carried on by kings—Solomon the type of the royal merchants of antiquity—Letters of kings demanding gold from Egypt—Letters from the king of Alashiya to Pharaoh	186

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS (*continued*).

Canaan before the Exodus—Political conditions of Canaan—Forms of the name—Petty kings of Canaan—Principal cities mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna Tablets—Tyre—Byblus—Officers of Egyptian king in these cities—Their duties—Their overthrow by rebels—Jerusalem—Way prepared for invasion of Israelites	207
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

SHUSHAN THE PALACE.

M. Dieulafoy's first journey to Persia and visit to Shush, the ancient Susa or Shushan—Loftus's excavations on this site in 1852—Inscription discovered by him—M. Dieulafoy's second journey to Susa in 1885—Account of his excavations—Character of people and country—His discovery of remains of the <i>Apadâna</i> , or hall of audience, built by Darius I. and restored by Artaxerxes II.—The architecture of this hall—Columns—Enamelled bricks—Mention of the palace of Susa in the Bible: Daniel, Nehemiah, Esther—Conquest of Susa by Sardapalus in the seventh century B.C.—Use of the <i>Apadâna</i> by Persian kings—Their banquets—Their various drinking-vessels—Conquest of Susa by Alexander—Treasures found there by him—Elucidation of the Book of Esther from secular sources—Name of Ahasuerus or Xerxes	229
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

THE STAR-GAZERS OF BABYLON.

Chaldean astrologers in the Roman Empire—Famous predictions—Astrology in the East to present day—Isaiah's allusion to Babylonian astronomers—Astrological tablets from Babylonia—Antiquity of observations of stars in Babylonia—Use of Babylonian records by Ptolemy—Discovery of original record of an eclipse mentioned by him	
---	--

	PAGE
—Discoveries of Strassmaier and Epping—Babylonian observatories— Tower of Babel—Divisions of time introduced from Babylon into other countries	258

CHAPTER XI.

LEGAL DEEDS OF THE BABYLONIANS.

Deeds of sale described by Jeremiah, compared with Babylonian documents of same character—System of pledges—History of Evil-Merodach— Chronology of Babylonian contracts—Kings of Babylon—Last kings of Assyria—Khammurabi identified with Amraphel—Sales of slaves— Wealth of priests of Sun-god at Sippara—Sales of houses—House-rent —Interest paid on money—Bills	277
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

LAST DAYS OF THE BABYLONIAN MONARCHY.

Belshazzar a puzzle to commentators before discovery of cuneiform inscrip- tions—Account by Berossus of last days of Babylonian monarchy— Herodotus—Canon of Ptolemy—Mention of Belshazzar in inscriptions of his father, Nabonidus—Inscription of Cyrus—Discovery of annals of Nabonidus proved Belshazzar to have acted as regent—Conquest of Babylon by Cyrus—Character of the last king of Babylon and causes which led to his downfall	298
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCOVERIES OF RECENT YEARS.

Difficulty in identification of Pul, the Assyrian king—His invasion of Samaria—History of Tiglath-Pileser III.—Final identification, through discovery of cuneiform inscriptions, of Tiglath-Pileser with Pul— Other instances of double names in Assyria and among Israelites— Discovery that name of Gisdubar, the Babylonian hero, is to be pro- nounced as Gilgamesh—Discovery of new version of Babylonian legend of creation—Assyrian hymns and psalms	315
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

A SUMMARY OF FORMER RESULTS.

Babylonian legends of creation—Story of Flood—Foundation of ancient cities of Mesopotamia—Size of Nineveh—Tower of Babel—Ur of the Chaldees—Haran—Invasion of Chedorlaomer and his allies—Monetary system of Babylonia—Period described in second Book of Kings, Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Azariah, Menahem, Ahaz, Pekah, Hoshea—Siege of Samaria begun in reign of Shalmaneser and finished in that of Sargon—So, king of Egypt—Deportation of the people of Samaria— Sargon's expedition against Ashdod—Sennacherib's invasion of Judah —Defeat of Tirhakah, and conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon and Sardanapalus—Merodach-baladan—Manasseh of Judah tributary to Esarhaddon and Sardanapalus—Manasseh taken to Babylon—The “great and noble Asnapper” perhaps Sardanapalus—Capture and plunder of No-Ammon, or Thebes, by the latter monarch—Nebuchad- nezzar—Persian kings	328
---	-----

CONTENTS.

xxiii

CHAPTER XV.

THE ASSYRIANS AS CONQUERORS.

	PAGE
Frequent invasions of Syria by Assyrians for the sake of tribute or plunder	
—The devastation wrought by them—Assyrians the first to found an empire—Conquests of Sargon I.—Kings of Ur—Invasion of Chedorlaomer—Egyptian preponderance in Western Asia after expulsion of Hyksos and during eighteenth dynasty—Tiglath-Pileser I. and his conquests—Ashur-nasir-pal and his conquests—Shalmaneser II. and his wars—Campaigns of Shamshi-Ramman—Ramman-nirari III.—Tiglath-Pileser III. and his conquests—Sargon II.—His conquests more extensive than those of his predecessors—Sennacherib—Account of his war with Hezekiah—Conquests of Esarhaddon and Sardanapalus—Nebuchadnezzar followed the example of his Assyrian predecessors . . .	354

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CULTURE OF ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA.

Wealth of Nineveh and Babylon—Their trade—Traditions of their riches among the Greeks—The precious metals—Copper—Art of working in metals—Clothing—Purple garments—Embroideries—Ivory ornaments—Glass—Decoration lavished upon all that surrounded the Assyrians—Form and arrangement of houses and their decoration—Sculpture—Writing and literature—Omens and magic—Connection of medicine with magic—Music—Laws of property	384
--	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN RELIGION.

Form of the universe—Connection of gods with the heavenly bodies—Principal gods: Bel-Merodach, the god of Babylon; his son, Nebo; Rimmon, Nergal, Tammuz, Dagon, Ashtoreth or Ishtar, Ashur the god of Assyria—Multitudes of inferior gods and spirits—Images of gods—Their worship	414
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN LANGUAGE.

Assyrian and Babylonian languages almost identical—Their use for comparison with Hebrew—Their monuments contemporary with Old Testament—Later date of literatures of other Semitic languages—Instances of help afforded by Assyrian and Babylonian language to understanding of Hebrew—Conclusion	444
---	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
TABLETS FOUND AT TELL EL-AMARNA	<i>Frontis.</i>
SARDANAPALUS IN HIS CHARIOT	5
SIEGE OF A TOWN BY THE ASSYRIANS	9
EUPHRATES AND PLAIN OF BABYLON, RUIN OF BIRS-NIMROUD IN THE DISTANCE	25
SITE OF NINEVEH	30
AKERKUP OR NIMROD'S TOWER	35
THE BEHISTUN ROCK	103
THE "CAILLOU MICHAUX"	109
CYLINDRICAL SEALS FROM BABYLONIA	112
WINGED BULL FROM KHORSABAD	115
MUKEYYER, IDENTIFIED BY SIR H. RAWLINSON WITH UR OF THE CHALDEES	132
FRAGMENT OF THE VULTURE-STELA	148
STATUE OF GUDEA AS ARCHITECT	161
FRIEZE FROM BYBLUS, EGYPTIAN WINGED DISK	218
MODERN TOWN OF SHUSTER	233
MOUNDS OF SHUSH OR SUSA	237
CAPITALS OF COLUMNS AT SUSA	240
FRIEZE OF LIONS AT SUSA	242
RESTORATION OF THE APADÂNA AT SUSA	250
RESTORATION OF ASSYRIAN OR BABYLONIAN TOWER IN STAGES	271
BIRS-NIMROUD: THE RUINS OF BIT-ZIDA	273
THE KUSH, OR RUINS OF THE PALACE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AT BABYLON	301
SOLITARY TAMARISK-TREE AMONG THE RUINS OF THE PALACE OF BABYLON	306
SARGON: BAS-RELIEF FROM HIS PALACE AT KHORSABAD	320
VILLAGE OF NEBI-YUNUS AMONG THE RUINS OF NINEVEH, CONTAINING THE SO-CALLED TOMB OF JONAH	323
SACRED TREE	330
ASSYRIAN VESSEL	388
ASSYRIAN SWORDS AND FLY-FLAP	389
ASSYRIAN CHARIOT AND TIARA	390
KING PUNISHING CAPTIVES	393
SENNACHERIB ON HIS THRONE	394
ASSYRIAN HEAD-STALL	397
ASSYRIAN JEWELLERY	398
IMAGINARY RESTORATION OF ASSYRIAN PALACE	402

NEW LIGHT ON THE BIBLE

AND

THE HOLY LAND.

Part I.

HISTORY OF THE DECIPHERMENT OF THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE RUIN OF NINEVEH AND BABYLON.

“I WILL speake of Babylon; not to the intent to tell stories, either of the huge ruines of the first Towne or the splendour of the second, but—because nothing doth impose anything in man’s nature more than example—to shew the truth of God’s word, whose vengeance, threatened by His Prophets, are truly succeeded in all those parts.

“All the ground on which Babylon was spread is left now desolate; nothing standing in that Peninsula between the Euphrates and the Tigris, but only part, and that a small part, of the great Tower, which God hath suffered to stand (if man may speake so confidently of His great impenetrable counsels), for an eternal Testimony of His great work in the confusion of Man’s pride, and that Arke of Nebuchadnezzar for as perpetual a memory of his great idolatry and condigne punishment.

“Ninive, that which God Himself calleth That great Citie, hath not one stone standing which may give memory of the being of a towne. One English mile from it is a place called Mosul, a small

thing, rather to be a witnesse of the other's mightinesse and God's judgment than of any fashion of Magnificence in it selfe."

SUCH were the impressions and reflections of Anthony Sherley, a *protégé* of the Earl of Essex in the reign of Elizabeth, and the first Englishman who has given us an account of the remains of Nineveh and Babylon. He had been sent on a military adventure to Ferrara, to assist the Duke with a body of troops against the attacking forces of the Pope; but on his arrival in Italy he had found the city already in the possession of the Papal army. Sherley's patron, not wishing him to return to England marked with the stigma of failure, now proposed that he should undertake a journey to the East, with various objects, both public and private: partly to help forward the newly-established trade in Asiatic Turkey, and partly to lend his aid to the scheme of "Indian Navigation, then principiated in Holland and muttered of in England." Accordingly, Sherley received large means and letters of credit to the Company of Merchants at Aleppo, started from Venice in May, 1599, and on arriving in Syria joined a caravan which was about to make its way through Mesopotamia to Persia.

Sherley's observations, in spite of certain topographical inaccuracies, represent fairly well the effect produced, by the famous ruins which he describes, upon the minds of travellers since his time; who, on account of their familiarity with the vivid pictures of the ancient magnificence of Nineveh and Babylon, presented in the richly coloured pages of the Hebrew prophets, have

always been deeply impressed by the contrast between those departed glories and the present loneliness of the spots on which these cities formerly stood. Before Sherley, the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris had been almost unknown to Europeans; Western scholars had to rely for their information on the works of ancient authors, and on the reports of one or two adventurous pilgrims. But a new era was now beginning; the Portuguese were no longer to have the monopoly of Eastern trade; other nations were asserting their right to navigate the Indian Ocean; and in A.D. 1595 the Dutch had founded their East India Company: an example which the English were not slow to follow. The new outlet for commercial activity drew a large number of traders to Asiatic Turkey, on their road to more distant regions, and some of these were sufficiently intelligent to make occasional notes on the antiquities of the countries which they visited. Moreover, a new intercourse was now established between the Persian Court and the European Powers, and Shah Abbas received at Ispahan the visits of many envoys from the West. Finally, now that the road was opened, the religious orders of Christendom were able to inaugurate permanent missions in Mahometan countries, which had hitherto, by their hostility, made the enterprise impossible.

An account of the decipherment of the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions naturally begins with a history of the sites of Nineveh and Babylon. It was through the visits of travellers to these famous spots that the

inscriptions were first discovered; and it was through the overwhelming interest felt by historians and theologians in all the remains of those ancient centres of civilisation, whence the oppressors of the Israelitish nation had come, that every effort was directed towards the interpretation of these inscriptions; while, on the other hand, the previous knowledge which scholars possessed of the history of these cities formed an important aid towards the interpretation of all written monuments proceeding from the ruins. Let us see, then, what had been the fate of Nineveh and Babylon when they ceased to be the capitals of empires.

We are more than once assured by ancient writers that the city of Nineveh was entirely demolished at the time of her capture: that is to say, about B.C. 606. The Medes, under their king, Cyaxares, and the Chaldæans, under Nebuchadnezzar, whose father, Nabopolassar, was then sitting on the throne of Babylon, had united their forces, and engaged in a siege that lasted, some say, seventeen years. The warlike and powerful monarch Ashur-bani-pal, the hero of so many wars and hunting expeditions, called Sardanapalus by the Greeks, had, in B.C. 626, been succeeded by his son, Ashur-itali, whose name is known to us from inscriptions on bricks which he had made for the construction of a temple at Calah, from contracts, and from a letter which alludes to a lady of his harem. This prince had in his turn been followed by Sin-shar-ishkun, called Saracus in the Greek history of Berosus, but often confused with his famous predecessor, Sardanapalus, from whom he differed

widely in character. Saracus became a bye-word among the nations, on account of his effeminate disposition ; entirely abstaining from war and the chase, the proper occupations of his station, he shut himself up in his



SARDANAPALUS IN HIS CHARIOT.

harem, and joined with his wives in the feminine employment of spinning wool. To complete his female character, he is said to have painted his face with white lead and other cosmetics. Near Tarsus, in Cilicia, there was a bas-relief, which remained there till the time of Alexander, representing an Assyrian king, probably

Sennacherib, the conqueror of that country ; it seems to have been one of the monuments so frequently found, in which the monarch stands erect, with one hand raised in an attitude of command, and an inscription relates the exploits of his reign. This was explained by the Greek *ciceroni* as the effigy of the last King of Assyria in the act of expressing his views on the value of life :—

“ Stranger, go thy way, eat, drink, and be merry ; for the rest of human life is not worth a snap of the fingers ! ”

Such was the reputation of the last successor of Sargon and Shalmaneser, the final ruler of the oldest empire of the world. During the long siege he had sat confidently in his palace, relying on the strength of the ramparts, and, it is said, on a prophecy, handed down from his ancestors, which ran :—

“ None shall take Nineveh by force until the river itself declares war upon the city.”

But the time was come for this prediction, which probably embodied former experiences of the destructive power of floods, to be fulfilled ; the Tigris, or the Khosr, rose to an unusual height above the stone basement of the walls, and broke down part of the mud rampart faced with burnt brick that was erected upon it, so that the Medes and Babylonians were able to enter through the breach. In the words of the prophet Nahum—

“ The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved.”

Saracus, in despair, collected his wives and much of his treasure in one of the great courtyards of his house, set fire to the whole, and perished in the conflagration. The gold and silver that could be saved from the fire was seized and sent away to Ecbatana, the capital of Media; * so Nahum exclaims:—

“Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture.”

The conquerors now had their revenge for the long resistance made by the ill-fated capital; they rased the whole city to the ground, and dispersed the inhabitants among the neighbouring towns.† Zephaniah poetically describes the desolation which now reigned on the scene of so much vanished splendour:—

“He will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.

“And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work.

“This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.”‡

The rivers of Mesopotamia, swollen every spring and autumn by the melted snows of the Armenian mountains, and by the rains, are subject to annual overflows.

* Diodorus Siculus, ii. 28.

† Diodorus Siculus, ii. 28; Strabo, xvi. i.

‡ Zeph. ii. 13-15.

The ancient monarchs, by a system of canalization, averted the dangers arising from this phenomenon, and turned the excess of waters to good account in fertilizing the dry lands at a distance from the stream; so that it was an exceptional event, perhaps caused by the stopping up of the canals, which led to the downfall of the ramparts of Nineveh. But when the system of canals fell into disorder, the districts near the rivers would be periodically flooded; and at the present day the Khosr, a branch of the Tigris which flowed under the walls of Nineveh, sometimes turns the plain into a swamp.* In this way we must explain the almost total disappearance of the vast city; the mud houses, dissolved by the waters, soon return as earth to earth. Only the walls, with their brick facing and their stone basement, can still in part be traced; and the gigantic palaces, raised on immense platforms, and constructed of the finest bricks, were not easily to be destroyed. They were partly burnt by the king himself, and partly, no doubt, thrown down by the battering-ram, so constantly used in the sieges of that period, until they formed immense heaps of ruined brick-work. Then they were buried under the decomposing material of the massive clay vaultings with which the chambers were roofed, and of the unbaked bricks which were mixed with the better material. In this way they came to form the huge mounds or artificial hills which Amyntas† described in his geographical work, and which the modern tra-

* F. Jones: "Topography of Nineveh," p. 22.

† See Athenaeus, xii. 39.

veller still sees on the eastern shore of the Tigris, opposite Mosul.

It is to these circumstances that we owe the preservation of the sculptures and inscribed tablets which, unseen and untouched from the downfall of Assyria to the present time, have allowed us in these latter days to



SIEGE OF A TOWN BY THE ASSYRIANS.

(Bas-relief from Nineveh).

study the history of the ancient empire. The mounds which cover the palaces of the Assyrian kings now form three heaps of ruins overgrown with grass, which break the outline of the city walls. Kouyunjik, or the "Citadel of Nineveh," as it is often called, the largest of the mounds, covers a space of one hundred acres, and forms a mass of fourteen millions and a half of tons of earth and brick-work; the second in size, Nebi Yunus,

encumbers forty acres with its six millions of tons of similar material. It has been computed that a thousand men constantly at work would require a hundred and twenty years to excavate the first, and fifty-four to dig out the second of the two hills. The recent excavations and tunnellings at Kouyunjik, fruitful as they have been in results, have made little impression on the vast mass of ruin, and only prove how much might be gained by a complete clearance.

Xenophon, with his ten thousand Greeks, retreated along the banks of the Tigris, about two hundred years after the triumph of the Medes and their allies, and if, in his account of the country, he alludes to Nineveh at all, it is as Mespila, a deserted city, around which the remains of a wall of brick on a basement of limestone could still be traced. But the inhabitants of the neighbourhood never forgot the name of the great metropolis; and very soon a new Nineveh arose on the ancient site. This probably took place before the time of Alexander the Great, for when Darius Codomanus started with his army to meet the conqueror on the march which ended in the fatal field of Arbela, he is described as making his way towards Nineveh.* The new town or fort must have been small and unimportant compared with its predecessor; but modern geographers, at any rate, should be grateful for its erection, as it has preserved the ancient name and made an exact identification possible. The generals of the Emperor Claudius, in their Parthian campaign of

* Diodorus Siculus, xvii. 53:

A.D. 49, captured the "town of Ninus." Apollonius of Tyana, who lived in the first century of our era, is said to have visited Nineveh in the course of his journey through the Parthian dominions; but as his life, written by Philostratus at the beginning of the third century, is an historical romance, it is dangerous to quote it as evidence of anything except the belief of the author that such a town existed at the time. In the wars of Trajan (A.D. 116) we find Nineveh the chief town of a province; and though Lucian, who was himself born on the banks of the Euphrates in the second century after Christ, says that Nineveh, so powerful and famous in her time, had now so completely disappeared that it was almost impossible to tell where she had stood, he is not, of course, speaking of the comparatively unimportant successor of the Assyrian capital. The statement is made in a dialogue between Charon and Hermes, in which the former, who has left his post in the infernal regions of ferryman of the dead, in order to pay a short visit to this upper world, which he is curious to inspect, asks Hermes, the swift-footed messenger of the gods, to act as his guide during a rapid tour around the chief sights.

CHARON: "Shew me the famous cities, of which we hear so much down below: the Nineveh of Sardanapalus, and Babylon, and Mycenæ, and Cleonæ, and especially Troy. I remember to have ferried over the Styx so many who came from this last place, that I could not haul my boat upon the bank, or have it thoroughly dried, for ten whole years."

HERMES: "Nineveh, O Ferryman, perished long ago, and there is no trace of her remaining; nor would you be able to tell where

she stood. Babylon is yonder city with the fair towers and the immense circuit of wall, but will soon have to be sought for like Nineveh." *

In the Persian campaign of the Emperor Julian, in A.D. 363, Nineveh appears as if she were still the principal town of her province. Two hundred and sixty-four years later, the name of the great capital of Sennacherib and Sardanapalus again became famous, because the plain in which she stood was the scene of the glorious victory of the Emperor Heraclius over the Persian monarch, Chosroes, in A.D. 627. The battle of Nineveh was the last triumph of the Roman Empire on the banks of the Tigris; a few years later, Assyria was included in the rapidly growing dominions of the Arab tribes, who had been driven by the fervour of their new faith to leave their native deserts and conquer the world.

But, meanwhile, the existence and comparative importance of the second Nineveh is proved by the choice of her as the see of a Christian bishop, subject to the Metropolitan of Adiabene. Isaac, Bishop of Nineveh, was the author of various theological works in the sixth century; and many others who held this see are known in the annals of the Syrian Church down to the ninth century, when the bishopric seems to have been abolished. There were several monasteries in this district during the Middle Ages, especially those of the Prophet Jonah, of Saint Matthew, and of Rabban Hormuzd. At the end of the twelfth century we hear of a Syrian primate, John of Sarug, who, in the course

* Lucian, Charon, 23.

of a visit to Nineveh, passed the night on the roof of the great church called *Beth Cudida*, fell off it in his sleep, and was killed. The next century is distinguished in the annals of the Oriental Churches and of Syriac literature by the life and works of Bar-Hebræus, the Primate of the East, who, in the course of his pastoral journeys, frequently visited Nineveh and the monasteries in its neighbourhood. Soon after his time the town sank into the position of a small village, through the ravages of the Kurds and the inroad of the Tartars, who destroyed her neighbour, Mosul, burnt the monasteries, and slew the Christian inhabitants.

Besides the testimonies to the existence of Nineveh which come to us from the Christians of the East, we must not forget those of the Mahometans. The fort of Ninawi, opposite Mosul, is spoken of in the account of the first campaigns of the Arabs by Beladhuri. The geographers all speak of the ancient capital of Assyria as having existed on this spot ; among them, Abulfeda is pre-eminent, because his works have long been widely known in Europe, and have led to the identification of many Eastern sites. The city of Mosul, on the western bank of the Tigris, however, had risen, after the Arab conquest, to such size and prosperity that it had superseded its ancient neighbour, and was itself sometimes mistaken for Nineveh. A still more common error, as we shall see later in the chapter, was that which placed Nineveh, in the opinion of some of the natives, at Eski-Mosul, many miles higher up the river.

Let us now leave the capital of Assyria, and see what had been the fate of Babylon since the southern city had ceased, in her turn, to be the metropolis of an empire. Babylon did not meet with the same treatment that she had dealt to her northern rival. Instead of being rased to the ground, she found herself almost intact, and still the chief town of a province. We do not know, indeed, what were the immediate causes which led to the entry of Cyrus into Babylon; possibly, if we may rely upon certain indications in two obscure documents written on clay in the cuneiform character, the Persian was invited by the discontented inhabitants to release them from their native sovereign, Nabonidus, who was not of royal descent, but had been raised to the throne by a conspiracy.

A passage on a clay cylinder is thus translated:—

“As a friend and helper did Cyrus enter into Babylon; his far-spreading armies, which, like the waters of the river, cannot be numbered, extended themselves at his side. Without resistance or fighting did the god Merodach bring him into Babylon, his city. He spared the city; Merodach delivered Nabonidus into his hand. The inhabitants of Babylon, the great men and the chief priests bowed down before him; they kissed his feet; they rejoiced that he had gained the kingdom.”

By whatever means the Persians were led to take possession of Babylon, it is certain that after the defeat of Nabonidus and the death of his son, Belshazzar, who was acting as regent, very little injury was done to the city. The walls were, perhaps, lowered; but it was the policy of Cyrus to conciliate the inhabitants by leaving their houses and their temples untouched; by professing

himself the fervent worshipper of the Babylonian gods; and by restoring to their temples the images which the late king—for what reason we know not—had taken away.

After the death of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, Darius, the son of Hystaspes, a member of a junior branch of the royal house, was set upon the throne by a conspiracy. A general rebellion took place in various quarters of the empire; the false Smerdis had been slain in Persia itself; but at Babylon, an impostor, calling himself Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidus, headed the insurrection of his countrymen. Darius, however, was victorious on the banks of the Euphrates, as he was at Susa and in Media; the great city was taken after a long siege, and severely punished for her attempt to free herself from the foreign yoke. The ruin of Babylon, in fact, may be said to date from the siege of Darius. He destroyed part of the walls—perhaps the whole of the outer wall which Nebuchadnezzar had built—he carried off the gates, and he put to death three thousand of the chief men. It is true that Babylon still remained one of the chief towns of the empire, and shared with Persepolis, Ecbatana, and Susa the honour of entertaining the Persian Court during a part of the year; but the days of her good fortune were over, and the successor of Darius carried on the work of demolition begun by his father. Xerxes, forgetting the policy of conciliation which had contributed so much to the success of Cyrus, and regardless of the religious feelings of his Chaldæan subjects, destroyed many, if

not all, of the temples in the city, and even demolished the great Temple of Bel itself : that immense structure which it had been the pride of the native monarchs to maintain. It must be put down to his credit, indeed, that he did not sequester the revenues settled upon this sanctuary by the ancient sovereigns. The Chaldæan priests continued to enjoy the rich income of their predecessors, although it could no longer be put to its proper use of supporting the worship of the god and keeping his shrine in repair. The Temple of Bel was henceforward nothing more than a vast heap of ruins, and soon became the shapeless mound of bricks and earth which, under the name of Babil or of Mujêlibah, the Overthrown, remains the wonder of travellers to the present day.

We have now come to the time when Herodotus, if we are to believe his own words, visited Babylon ; but the description of the Greek historian would seem rather to apply to the city as it had been in the days of its greatness than as he actually saw it. He describes the walls as if they were still standing ; though, later in his work, he himself confesses that Darius had demolished them and carried off their gates. From his account of the great temple, too, we should suppose that it was still perfect, and its worship was still carried on ; but yet he admits that Xerxes had carried off the golden statue of the god which stood in the outer enclosure, and had slain the priest who attempted to defend it. Perhaps Professor Sayce is right, and Herodotus had not himself visited the banks

of the Euphrates ; or his account of the temple must be taken as applying to the second great sanctuary at Borsippa, according to the theory of M. Oppert.

As we have seen, however, the Persian kings still looked upon the city, which they had done so much to injure, as their spring head-quarters ; it was still the capital of a territory from which they derived a third of their whole revenue. Artaxerxes Mnemon was at Babylon when his brother Cyrus advanced against him with his army of Asiatic rebels and Greek mercenaries ; and it was thither that this monarch retired, after his victory of Cunaxa, to celebrate his triumph, and to reward the general, Tissaphernes, with the hand of his daughter. It was at Babylon that Artaxerxes Ochus assembled his troops for his war against the Phœnicians, the Cypriotes, and the Egyptians, and thither that he returned with his army and his spoils. At Babylon, again, Darius Codomannus, the last of his line, collected his forces to repel the advance of Alexander the Great ; and to Babylon he returned after his defeat at Issus. Finally, it was from Babylon that this ill-fated monarch started on his march through Mesopotamia, which ended in the decisive battle of Arbela and the fall of the Persian dynasty. The Babylonians were always ready for a change of government, and they welcomed Alexander, after the overthrow of Darius, as formerly they had welcomed Cyrus.

“The greater part of the citizens stood on the walls, eager to see the new sovereign ; many went out to meet him. Bagophanes, the keeper of the citadel and of the royal treasury, was the first to go

forth ; he had caused the road to be strewn with flowers and garlands, and had arranged a number of silver altars at intervals on each side of the way ; and upon these incense and all other scented gums were burning. As presents, he took out with him herds of sheep and horses, besides lions and leopards, which were carried in their cages. Then came the Magi, chanting ancient hymns to their peculiar melodies ; next went the Chaldean priests and the Babylonian singers and musicians, with their native harps. Last rode the Babylonian horsemen, who, with their gorgeous robes and the rich trappings of their steeds, made a display of effeminate luxury rather than of military splendour." *

If Alexander, now master of Asia, had lived to carry out his plans, Babylon would again have become the capital of an empire. On his return from India, the Macedonian conqueror was warned by the Babylonian priests that he must not enter their city, for an oracle of the god Bel had announced that he would incur great danger by doing so.

"But there was something which seemed suspicious to Alexander in the conduct of the Chaldean priests, and made him think that it was not so much on account of an oracle as for their own profit that they wished to prevent him from entering. For the Temple of Bel, standing in the midst of Babylon, was the greatest of all their sanctuaries, and was built of baked bricks cemented with bitumen. This temple, as well as the others, had been demolished by Xerxes when he returned from Greece ; but Alexander had it in his mind to rebuild it, either on the old foundations or, as some say, on a larger scale than before ; and for this reason [when he first took possession of the city] he ordered the natives to clear away the mass of ruins ; but while he was absent, those to whom the work had been entrusted carried it on without energy, so that when he returned he intended to set his whole army to work upon the task. Now, the god Bel possessed much land, with which he had been endowed by the Assyrian kings, and much gold, which allowed the temple to be kept in repair and

* Quintus Curtius, v. i.

sacrifices to be offered to the god ; but since the destruction of the temple, the Chaldaean priests had enjoyed the revenues of the god, because there was no other object upon which the balance of money could be expended. For this reason Alexander suspected that they did not wish him to enter the city, because the temple would, in that case, soon be restored, and they would lose the advantage of its revenues." *

The fears of the crafty priests were not realised ; a few days later, and the conqueror had expired. The great temple, therefore, must soon have become a mere mound, such as that which travellers have long remarked on the east bank of the Euphrates, a little to the north-east of the modern Hillah. This artificial hill, which has specially retained the name of Babil, or Babylon, has for many years been identified as the remains of the immense structure which Alexander wished to restore, the sanctuary named Bit-Saggil by the ancient Babylonians, which, with the other great temple of Bit-Zida, at Borsippa, it had been the pride of the native monarchs to maintain and keep in repair. The death of Alexander was followed by a deadly struggle among his generals, who, under the nominal supremacy of his imbecile half-brother, or his infant son, made a partition of his empire. Babylonia fell to the share of Seleucus, who for some years had to carry on wars with Antigonus and his allies, and for a time fled to Egypt, and left the city in the possession of his rival. The city of Babylon suffered severely during this period ; and when Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, advanced to lay siege to the place, he found the whole space within

* Arrian, *Anab.*, vii. 16.

the walls deserted, except the citadel. When Seleucus, in B.C. 312, was recognised as undisputed master of Babylonia and Syria, he determined to strengthen his position by abolishing the memory of former dynasties, and he dealt a deadly blow to the ancient metropolis by founding on the Tigris a new city, which he named Seleucia, after himself, and to which he induced the inhabitants of Babylon to migrate, with the object of exhausting the former capital. The Macedonian king, however, allowed part of the population to remain in their ancient seat, and especially gave permission to the priests to continue to dwell near their ruined temples. But though Babylon was thus drained of its inhabitants, and fell from its former greatness, the province continued to be called Babylonia, and the people Babylonians; thus we hear of a Greek philosopher, Diogenes the Babylonian, who lived at Seleucia. The new capital itself, too—so vivid was the memory of the ancient name—sometimes received the appellation of Babylon; and in later times, when the Parthians made Ctesiphon their chief town, this was often in its turn named Babylon, at least by the Greeks and Romans; and many centuries after, when the Mahometans destroyed Ctesiphon and founded Bagdad, this latest metropolis of Mesopotamia was constantly spoken of in the West under the name of the unforgotten city of Nebuchadnezzar. Under the Roman Empire, the name of Babylon was generally well known; not only to scholars who had read of the vast and wealthy city, the home of the earliest astronomers, whither some of the

greatest philosophers had resorted for study, which alone exhibited in its walls and hanging-gardens two out of the seven wonders of the world; but to men of all sorts and conditions. This was for two reasons: firstly, because all parts of the empire were invaded by a host of Chaldæan astrologers, fortune-tellers, and conjurers, able to foretell the hour of a man's death or to charm away his diseases; secondly, because there was a great demand for Babylonian embroidered stuffs, which were employed for hangings and couch coverings. The Emperor Nero gave £3,360 for a set of the latter. The embroideries of Babylonia were only rivalled by the damasks of Egypt; hence Martial wrote the following epigram to accompany a present of some bedchamber hangings woven with designs in many-coloured threads:

"This is a gift which comes to you from the land of Memphis; now you see the needle of the Babylonian embroiderer outdone by the comb of the weaver on the Nile." *

After the Macedonian conquest of Babylonia, the native embroiderers, under the influence of the invaders, had sometimes introduced Greek subjects into their designs.

"The chamber of Habrocomes and Anthia was thus arranged: the golden bed was overlaid with scarlet coverlets, and above the bed was an embroidered Babylonian canopy. On one side of the latter were depicted Loves in attendance upon Aphrodite, some riding upon sparrows, some weaving garlands, some bringing flowers. On the other side was Ares, unarmed and decked for his wedding with Aphrodite; he was crowned with roses, and wearing a tunic; Eros was leading him, holding in his hand a burning torch." †

* Martial, xiv. 150.

† Xenophon, *Ephesiaca*, i.

Meanwhile, although Seleucia was usurping her place, and sometimes her name, the original Babylon was, as we have seen, still partly inhabited; and Antiochus Soter (B.C. 281–262), the son and successor of Seleucus, made some pretence of restoring the great temple of the city and that of its suburb, Borsippa. Perhaps he actually made some repairs in the latter, which was probably less injured than the other shrine which Alexander had wished to re-build; in any case, a clay cylinder of his reign has been found among the ruins at Birs Nimroud, in which he speaks of causing bricks to be made and of laying the foundations. The inscription ends thus:—

“May I conquer the lands from the rising to the setting of the sun; may I bring their tribute for the completion of Bit-Saggil and Bit-Zida. O Nebo, princely son, when thou enterest into Bit-Zida, the true temple, may a blessing for Antiochus, the king of many countries, for Seleucus the king, his son, and for Stratonice, his wife, the queen, be in thy mouth!”

It was in this reign that Berossus, a priest of Bel, probably attached to the former of the two ruined temples mentioned above, translated into Greek, from the clay tablets and cylinders inscribed with cuneiform characters, a history of Babylon from the earliest times to his own day, and this he dedicated to Antiochus Soter. Unfortunately, the work is lost, and only known to us from the scanty quotations given by Josephus, Eusebius, Georgius Syncellus, and other writers.

In B.C. 246 Babylonia fell under new masters, and

the Macedonian dynasty was forced to make way for the Parthians. These invaders, under their king, Arsaces, continued to regard Seleucia as the capital, but chose for the residence of the Court and army a small suburb on the opposite, or eastern, bank of the Tigris, named Ctesiphon. That Babylon was still peopled under the new rulers, we have proof in the rebellion in which she took part about B.C. 127, for which she was severely chastised by the Parthian general, Himerus, who sold most of the inhabitants into slavery, burnt the market-place and the temples that were still standing, and destroyed all that was left of the principal buildings. Nothing now remained but a ruined rampart, enclosing a few scattered hamlets. The vast city had almost disappeared.

Besides the political causes of her disappearance, there were also physical causes at work. The district of Babylon is even more exposed to the dissolving action of the floods than Nineveh. The annual rising of the Euphrates had been kept in check under the native sovereigns by an elaborate network of canals, but these required constant care to prevent them from being choked up by the accumulation of the soft alluvial soil at their mouths. One of the chief functions of the ancient kings had been to preserve the free circulation of the waters, and thus to turn Babylonia from a marsh into a fertile plain covered with prosperous cities ; and though the Persians neglected this duty, Alexander had at once given his attention to the restoration of the canals, and superintended in person the work upon that

called *Pallacopas*, or *Pallacottas*,* by the Greeks, often mentioned in commercial documents of the Babylonians as the river *Palkatkatum*. Under the Parthians this system of drainage was almost entirely forgotten; a few of the chief canals, indeed, exist to the present day, but the annual floods soon began again their work of destruction. The mud houses, therefore, of which the vast city was chiefly composed, were soon dissolved. The outer walls, stripped of their brick facing, became mere ramparts of earth or were washed away. Little was left except the immense mounds formed by ruined temples and palaces. We have seen what the Temple of Bit-Saggil became after its destruction by Xerxes; the mound of Babil, thought to be identical with it, now forms a mass of crumbling brick-work about two hundred yards long and fifty yards high. To the south of this lies the *Kasr*, or palace, a somewhat smaller ruin, in which walls of the finest brick-work, formerly faced with enamelled tiles, are to be found. South of this, again, is the mound of Tell-Amran, identified by M. Oppert with the hanging-gardens of Nebuchadnezzar. There are also traces of the wall of the citadel, enclosing a space of about $3\frac{3}{4}$ square miles, and there are vestiges of the embankment along the river side. On the other bank of the river, to the south of Hillah, is the ruin of Birs Nimroud, a mass of broken brick-work more than 700 yards in circumference at the base, now known to represent the temple of Bit-Zida, in the suburb of Borsippa, part of the vast

* Appian, *De bellis civilibus*, ii. 153.

city which Nebuchadnezzar enclosed with two lofty walls, and which must have been seven times as large as Paris.

That Babylon must have fallen into a state not very different from this before the beginning of our era there



EUPHRATES AND PLAIN OF BABYLON, RUIN OF BIRS NIMROUD IN DISTANCE.

is sufficient evidence. In the reign of Augustus, it is said of her that

“The great city has become a great desert,” *

although there were still some inhabitants on the desolate site. It seems that the Jews especially clung to the scene of their captivity; a plague, in the time of

* Strabo, xvi. 1.

Caligula, drove them from the hamlets of Babylon to Seleucia, but they appear to have returned, and to have dwelt on the spot far into the Mahometan period. The Emperor Trajan, the only Roman general whose conquest of Babylonia was more than momentary, after capturing the Parthian capitals of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and mastering their whole territory down to the Persian Gulf, was drawn by a sentimental interest to visit the remains of Babylon, the scene of Alexander's death and of so much departed magnificence. The imperial visitor was able to offer sacrifice in the house (no doubt a wreck) in which the Macedonian conqueror, the object of his admiration and the model of his conduct, had breathed his last; but he found nothing worthy of the fame of Babylon, only

“ Mounds, and legends, and ruins.” *

After Trajan, Babylonia was invaded by the Emperors Lucius Verus (A.D. 162), who took and destroyed Seleucia; Septimius Severus (A.D. 201), who burnt Ctesiphon; and Carus (A.D. 283), who captured the latter city, now restored by the new Sassanian dynasty, which had overthrown the Parthians in A.D. 227. But we do not hear of the ancient city of Babylon in any of these campaigns. In A.D. 363 Julian the Apostate advanced to the walls of Ctesiphon, in the course of the war which ended in his death. By this time the Sassanian kings of Persia had turned the deserted citadel of Babylon to a new use, for they

* Dio Cassius, lxxviii. 30.

had restored the ramparts to a sufficient height to prevent the egress of wild beasts, and had turned the enclosure into a park, where they enjoyed their favourite amusement of hunting.

“As the Emperor Julian was marching forward through Babylonia, he passed other unimportant fortresses, and came at last to a walled enclosure, which the natives pointed out as a royal hunting-ground. It was a low rampart, enclosing a wide space planted with trees of every sort, in which all kinds of beasts were shut up; they were supplied with food by keepers, and gave the king the opportunity of hunting whenever he felt inclined. When Julian saw this, he caused a large part of the wall to be overthrown, and as the beasts escaped they were shot down by his soldiers.” *

Without pausing to comment on the unfair way in which the Roman Emperor thus spoiled his enemy's sport, we proceed to remark that it was a park of this sort that the site of Babylon had become under the Sassanian kings: so at least Saint Jerome, at the beginning of the fifth century, assures us:—

“Herodotus and many others who have written histories in Greek tell us that Babylon was a most powerful city, built square in the midst of a plain, and measuring sixty-four miles in circumference. The citadel or Capitol of that city is the same as the tower which was built after the Flood, and is said to have reached the height of four miles, and to have been built in the form of a pyramid. They tell of marble temples in that city, of golden statues, of streets glittering with gold and silver, and many other things which almost seem incredible. I have mentioned all these matters that I may show that before the wrath of God all power is as dust, and is compared to cinders and ashes. If it was possible for us to travel among a barbarous nation, and to see the last traces of this

* Zosimus, iii. 23.

city, we should but behold the possession of the hedgehog,* and pools of water, and the true fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah : ‘ I will sweep it with a besom of destruction.’ For except the walls of baked bricks, which were restored many years ago for the purpose of enclosing wild beasts, the whole space in the midst is a solitude.

“ I was informed by a certain Elamite brother, who came from those regions, and now leads the life of a monk at Jerusalem, that there is a royal hunting ground at Babylon, and that wild game of every kind is contained within the circuit of its walls.” †

The Assyrian, Median, and Achæmenian monarchs had always made hunting their chief occupation alternately with war, and the Sassanian kings followed their example. Of the hunting expeditions of this period we have vivid pictures in the beautiful Sassanian bas-reliefs still existing at Tak-i-Bostan.

It was the universal belief of the ecclesiastical writers of the fifth and sixth centuries that Babylon had ceased to be ; and Synesius, for instance, says that a visitor would not be aware that such a city had existed. This testimony is, however, no more than hearsay, and so need not be more fully quoted.

When the Arabs, in the first half of the seventh century, overthrew the Sassanian kings, and took possession of Babylonia, they seem to have found few inhabitants on the site of the ancient capital, although the Jews still lived in the hamlets of the neighbourhood. But the Mahometans retained the name of District of Babil as the designation of the spot on which Hillah was afterwards built, in A.D. 1100 ; and

* So the Septuagint and Vulgate render the word translated “ bittern ” by the Authorised Version.

† S. Jerome : In Isaiam, ch. xiii. 20 and xiv. 22.

the name of Babil was, as we have already seen, more particularly preserved for the huge mound which has recently been recognised as the ruin of Bit-Saggil, called the Temple or Tomb of Belus by the Greeks. The Arabs destroyed Ctesiphon, and founded, in A.D. 760, the city of Bagdad, which now, as inheriting the rank of the former capitals, earned in the West the title of the New Babylon.

Let us now turn to Europe, and see what has been the knowledge of these ancient sites from the decay of learning which followed the irruption of the Goths up to the present day.

Conspicuous among the few travellers who ventured into the hostile regions of the East stands Benjamin, a Jewish merchant of Tudela, in Northern Spain, who made a journey through foreign countries about A.D. 1160, to visit the synagogues of his people, especially at Jerusalem, the holy city of his nation, and at Bagdad, the seat of its last princes. In the preceding century the ancient Jewish community of Babylon, the "Holy Synagogue of Babel," had left the hamlets on the site of the great city, and had settled in the Mahometan capital. Benjamin passed through Mosul, which, he says, is united by a bridge with the ancient Nineveh, and, although the latter lay in ruins, he saw some small towns upon its site; one of these was, of course, the seat of the Christian bishopric to which reference has already been made. At a later point in his narrative the traveller speaks of the extensive ruins of Babylon, three days' journey beyond Bagdad; they

included the palace of Nebuchadnezzar—that is to say, probably the mound of Babil—and the ruin of Birs Nimroud, which he supposes, in accordance with the Jewish tradition, to be the Tower of Babel. His



SITE OF NINEVEH.

account of the latter, which shows that it was in a state of better preservation than at present, may perhaps be quoted once more :—

“The tower built by the dispersed generation is four miles from Hillah. It is constructed of bricks called al-ajur” [this is the old Babylonian word for a baked brick] ; “the base measures two miles,

the breadth 240 yards, and the height about 100 reeds" [a measure of six cubits]. "A spiral passage, built into the tower (from ten to twelve yards), leads up to the summit, from which there is a prospect of twenty miles, the country being one wide plain, and quite level. The heavenly fire which struck the tower split it to its very foundation."

Shortly after the death of Benjamin, another Jew, the Rabbi Pethachiah of Ratisbon, also made a pilgrimage to the East for the purpose of visiting the scattered congregations of his people. It must always be borne in mind that these early travellers never journeyed for a purely scientific purpose; they went as traders or pilgrims, or political envoys or missionaries, and the information they give us of historical or geographical interest is always composed of notes, more or less scanty, made by the way. The narrative of Pethachiah has only come down to us in the form of an abridgment made by one of his disciples.

"From Nisibis, after five days' journey, Rabbi Pethachiah arrived at the new Nineveh on the Tigris. He crossed the river, and, after having travelled for three days, he arrived at the ancient Nineveh, which is now ruined. The soil in the neighbourhood is like pitch, and the principal place of Nineveh, which was formerly a forest, has been overthrown like Sodom, so that neither herbs nor bushes are to be found there; and the new Nineveh lies upon the opposite bank. . . .

"From Bagdad the Rabbi Pethachiah went in two days to the extremity of ancient Babylon. The palace of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked is entirely ruined. Near its old walls you see a column, and the house of Daniel; you see also the stone on which he used to sit, and the marble on which he rested his feet; above is the stone on which was placed the book that he wrote. . . .

"On his way to the tomb of Ezechiel, Pethachiah passed by the Tower of the dispersed generation. It is falling into decay, and

forms a lofty mound, an eternal ruin ; but the town which was in its neighbourhood has been demolished."

Bagdad is almost always named Babylon by the Rabbi ; but, in spite of the inaccuracies of their narratives, the two Israelites stand alone among the travellers of their age. It is disappointing, after their accounts, to find that Marco Polo, a hundred years later, visited Mosul and Bagdad without leaving any notice of the historical sites lying near these towns, in his delightful Book concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East. Sir John Mandeville made a pilgrimage to Palestine between A.D. 1322 and 1356, but he did not visit Mesopotamia. His account of that region is borrowed from ancient writers and from other travellers of his period. The Friar Odericus wrote an itinerary in A.D. 1330, in which he related his adventures on the way to Tartary, but beyond a mention of the Tower of Babel, which he passed, he gives us no particulars of the kind that we require.

Early in the fifteenth century a member of the noble family of Conti travelled from Venice to Arabia, Chaldæa, and India for the purpose of trade ; he returned in A.D. 1444. During his sojourn in Mahometan countries he had renounced Christianity in order to save his life, which was in danger from his fanatical companions ; and on his return to Italy he sought absolution from Pope Eugenius IV. This pontiff, well known for his zeal for learning, imposed upon the traveller the novel penance of composing and dictating a full and accurate account of his journeys,

and this was written down in Latin by his Florentine secretary, Poggio. The interest which it aroused at the time is proved by the Portuguese translation, which King Manoel I. caused to be made in A.D. 1500 for the instruction of his navigators, who had recently made their way round the Cape, and were beginning to explore the coasts of Asia. Conti, however, fell into the common mistake made by European travellers in the Middle Ages, and occasionally even down to the last century, of supposing that Bagdad stood on the site of the ancient Babylon, by which name they often call the Mahometan capital. His words are :—

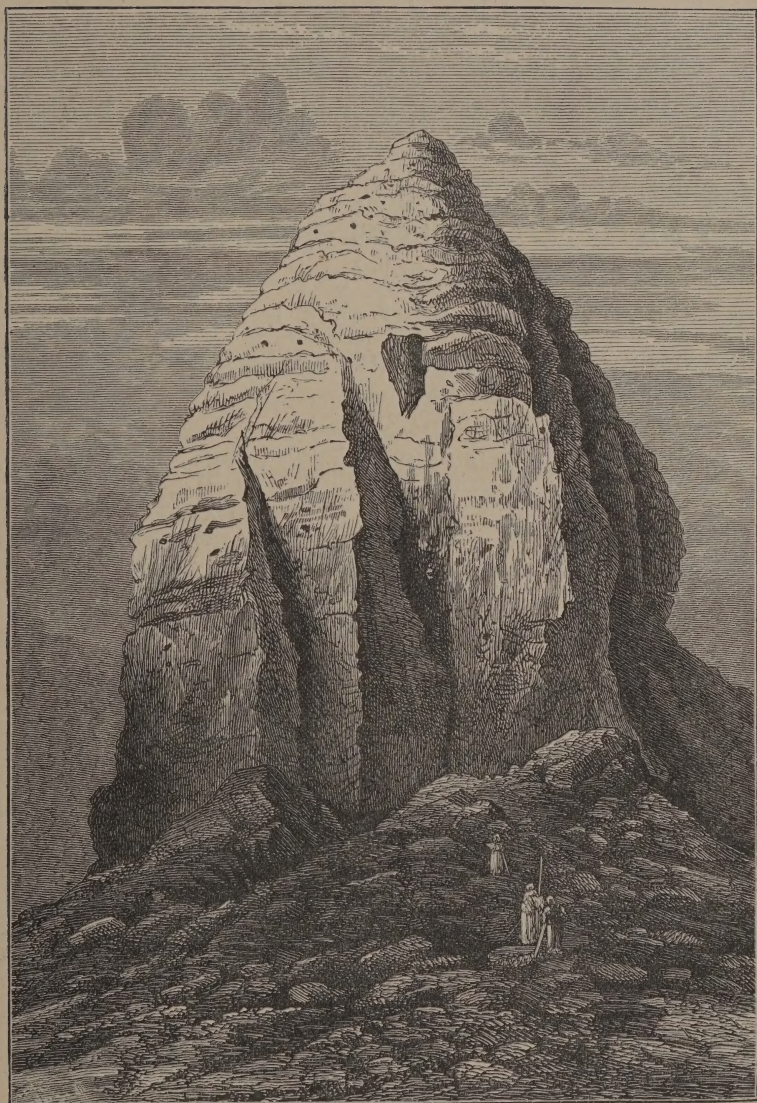
“On the river Euphrates (*sic*) stands a part of the most noble and ancient city of Babylon, fourteen miles in circuit, the inhabitants of which at present call it Bagdad. The river runs through the middle of it, spanned by a strong bridge of fourteen arches, which unites the two halves of the city. Many remains and foundations of ancient buildings are still to be seen.”

The exact state of the information which the scholars of Western Europe possessed at the end of the sixteenth century is shown by the learned and celebrated Geographical Treasury of Ortelius, of Antwerp, published in A.D. 1596. In this work it is simply stated that certain writers identified Nineveh with Mosul; whether this is correct or not the geographer is unable to decide, Mosul was also identified with Seleucia by some. Most of the authorities quoted by Ortelius place the modern Bagdad, or Baldach, as it was often called, upon the site of ancient Babylon; Benjamin of Tudela being the only exception. It was the easier for Ortelius

to accept this identification because, so confusing were the scanty reports of mediæval travellers, he believes, like Conti, that Bagdad was upon the Euphrates, and there he sets it in his map.

We have now come to the period when travellers in the East began to multiply, and their reports became fuller and more intelligent. We shall find, however, a certain vagueness in their opinions about the sites of Nineveh and Babylon. The first they place near Mosul, but whether it lay on the eastern bank, opposite the modern town, or some miles higher up the river, at Eski-Mosul, they are often at a loss to say. Babylon is generally placed by them between Felujah, where the traveller leaves the Euphrates on his way to Bagdad, and the latter city, which they often supposed to stand on the same ground as part of the ancient capital; the ruin of Akerkuf, or Nimrod's Tower, which is passed on the road, was generally accepted as the Tower of Babel.

One of the most interesting documents in Hakluyt's collection of voyages and travels, published in 1599, is a translation from the Italian of the narrative of Cesare de' Federici, or, as he is here called, Cæsar Frederike, a merchant of Venice, who started on a journey to the East in 1563. He is the first who gives us an account of the Tower of Akerkuf, to which allusion has just been made, and which has recently been proved, by inscriptions in cuneiform characters, to have been part of the ancient Babylonian town of Dur-Kurigalzu. It is, indeed, very far from Borsippa, where the Tower of Babel actually was.



AKERKUF, OR NIMROD'S TOWER.

Leonhardt Rauwolf was a physician of Augsburg, who travelled to the East in 1573, for the purpose of collecting medical herbs. At Aleppo he disguised himself in Oriental garments, and started with a caravan for Bagdad. At Felujah, on the Euphrates, he saw mounds which, according to the common error which has already been mentioned, he supposed to be the remains of Babylon; and he gives a description of Akerkuf, under the belief that he had there beheld the scene of the confusion of tongues. His account of Nineveh is more correct:—

“At Mosul and in the neighbourhood lay in ancient times the mighty city of Nineveh. . . . In our days, except the fortress which stands on a hill on the opposite side of the river, and certain small hamlets which, according to the inhabitants, formed part of the ancient city, no ruins, such as those of Babylon, are still remaining.”

The fortress on the hill is, of course, Kouyunjik, which, as we now know, covers the ruined palace of Sennacherib and his successors.

In 1583 there was a band of English traders at Bagdad and Bassorah. They were preparing the way for the foundation of the East India Company, and some of their letters were published in consequence of the general interest felt in the new Eastern trade. In one of these, John Eldred, not unmindful of the historical ground on which he stood, speaks of Bagdad as identical with the ancient city of Babylon. It was soon after this time that Anthony Sherley, whose observations are placed at the beginning of the chapter,

visited the desolate scenes of ancient magnificence which made so strong an impression upon him.

One of the most intelligent travellers in the early years of the seventeenth century was John Cartwright. He was the first European who attempted a survey of the ruins of Nineveh, among which he seems to have included the remains of neighbouring cities, unless his figures are entirely wrong.

“We set forward toward Mosul. . . . Here . . . was Ninive, built by Nimrod, but finished by Ninus. . . . It seemes by the ruinous foundation, which I thoroughly viewed, that it was built with four sides, but not equall or square, for the two longer sides had each of them, as wee ghesse, a hundred and fifty furlongs, the two shorter sides ninety furlongs, which amounteth to four hundred and eighty furlongs of ground, which makes sixty miles, accounting eight furlongs to an Italian mile. Now it is destroyed, as God foretold it should be, by the Chaldaeans, being nothing else than a sepulture of her selfe, a little Towne of small trade, where the Patriarch of the Nestorians keeps his seat. . . .

“The citie of Bagdad by some is called New Babylone, and may well be, because it did rise out of the ruins of old Babylon, not farre distant. . . . Two places of greate antiquitie did we thoroughly view in this country; the one was the ruines of the old Tower of Babel, as the inhabitants hold unto this day, built by Nimrod. . . . And now at this day that which remayneth is called the remnant of the Tower of Babel; there standing as much as is a quarter of a mile in compass, and as high as the stone-worke of Paul’s Steeple in London. It was built of burnt brick cimented and joyned with bituminous mortar. . . . The bricks are three quarters of a yard in length and one quarter in thickness, and betweene every course of bricks there lieth a course of mats made of canes and palm-tree leaves, so fresh as if they had been laid within one yeare.

“The other place remarkable is the ruines of old Babylon. . . . Some doe think that the ruines of Nimrod’s Tower is but the foundation of the Temple of Bel, and that, therefore, many travellers

have been deceived who suppose they have seen part of the tower which Nimrod builded. But who can tell whether it be one or the other? It may be that confused chaos we saw was the ruins of both, the Temple of Bel being founded on that of Nimrod."

The tower here described is, of course, again Akerkuf, which was always forced upon the notice of European travellers, through its position on the road leading from the Euphrates to the Tigris, and to the city of Bagdad. Very few of these strangers from the west went southwards to Hillah, or examined the actual ruins of Babylon. But, at any rate, they passed through the territory of Babylon. Gasparo Balbi, a Venetian jeweller, and Alexander Hamilton, who both travelled at the end of the sixteenth century, speak in much the same terms as Cartwright of the remains that they saw on their way to Bagdad between the two great rivers. Hamilton names Masol (Mosul) as the ancient Nineveh.

Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa, the ambassador from Philip III. of Spain to the Persian Court at this period, alludes to the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon; but a much fuller description of the latter is given by Pietro della Valle, a Roman gentleman, who, though he still fancies that Bagdad was on the site of Babylon, paid a visit to the great mound near Hillah, which has never lost the name of Babel, but which he mistook for the tower the building of which led to the confusion of tongues. Della Valle caused an artist who accompanied him to make a drawing of the mound; he also collected some of the bricks with which the ground was

strewn, and subsequently took them back with him to Rome, where he presented one of them to Athanasius Kircher, the learned Jesuit. Kircher, as he tells us in his treatise on the Tower of Babel, a monument of erudition and ingenuity, placed this brick in the museum which he had recently founded, in the belief that it had formed part of an edifice which had been the scene of one of God's most astounding judgments upon mankind. It is still to be seen in the Museo Kircheriano, and must always be of interest to archæologists as the first relic of Babylonian antiquity which reached Europe.

Pedro Teixeira, a Portuguese who visited Mesopotamia in the first years of the seventeenth century, seems aware that the real site of Babylon is at some distance from Bagdad, which generally bears the name, and says that the ruins are still called Babel, but that only "inconsiderable footsteps," as the English translator has it, still remain to show what the great city was. Sir Thomas Herbert went out with the British Ambassador to Shah Abbas in 1626. He returned through Mesopotamia, and, accordingly, mentions Bagdad as the new Babylon, and the Tower of Akerkuf. The French traveller, Tavernier, visited Mosul in 1644, and speaks thus, according to a translation of the period :—

"Nineveh was built upon the left shoar of the Tigris, upon Assyria-side, being only a heap of rubbish extending almost a league along the river. . . . Though Bagdat usually bears the name of Babylon, yet it is at a great distance from the ancient Babylon."

He proceeds to describe the well-known ruin of Akerkuf, but says it is doubtful whether this really represents the Tower of Babel.

Meanwhile, the various religious orders—the Augustinians, the Carmelites, the Franciscans, and the Jesuits—were sending out their missions into Asiatic Turkey and into Persia. Father Vincenzo Maria di Santa Caterina da Siena, a Carmelite, returned overland from India in 1657, and though the account which he gives of this journey is somewhat confused, at least he visited Hillah, and was, perhaps, the first since Benjamin of Tudela who places the site of Babylon correctly:—

“On the 16th September we arrived at Hillah, passing along beautiful banks covered with palms and other fruit trees, and abounding in the necessities of life. Here we remained for several days.

“It is a very general opinion that this place was the ancient Babylon, which is proved by the site being on the banks of the Euphrates, by the fertility of the adjacent lands, and by the ruins of magnificent buildings, which abound for many miles around; but above all, by the remains of the Tower of Babel, which to this day is called Nimrod’s Tower. We were curious to see these buildings, but finding that no one would accompany us for fear of robbers, we were compelled to give it up.” *

Among the collection of Edifying Letters written by various Fathers of the Society of Jesus who were engaged in foreign missions, there is one sent from Bassorah, on October 19th, 1675, to Monsieur Savary, general agent for the Duke of Mantua in France. In

* I am obliged to quote this rare book at second-hand from Mrs. Rich’s preface to her husband’s “Journey to Babylon.” (London, 1839.)

this there is an account of the journey of the writer through Mesopotamia :—

“On April 13th we arrived at Mousol, or Mosul. This town is in the neighbourhood of the spot where Nineveh once existed ; some ruins of the latter are still seen, half buried under the ground. . . . On the opposite side of the Tigris, in the country of the Medes, there are several Christian hamlets. It is on the same side that the ruins of Nineveh are perceived. In the midst is a tomb, held by tradition to be that of the Prophet Jonah, which the Turks have enclosed in a mosque built for that purpose on these remains. . . .

“Scarcely had we penetrated a few leagues into Chaldæa along the river, when we saw in the distance the ruins of ancient Babylon, the mournful dwelling-place of the Jewish people under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. These ruins extend farther than the eye can reach : they are vast and impressive. That day we continued our journey ; and if night had not overtaken us in a certain spot, we should have seen the remains of the Tower of Babel, although some say that these are the ruins of a tower built by the modern Arabs. On the nineteenth we arrived at last at Bagdad, which is the new Babylon.”

At the end of Vol. XXX. of the first edition of the *Lettres Édifiantes*, there was a dissertation, afterwards suppressed, in support of the opinion hinted at in this letter, that Bagdad was on the site of a part of Babylon, and that the mounds between the modern city and the Euphrates, including the Tower of Akerkuf, show the great extent of the ancient capital, which must have covered the ground between the two rivers. The same views were expressed by another Jesuit, the Father Villotte, who published in 1730 a book of travels in Turkey, Persia, Armenia, Arabia, and Barbary. It is useless, however, to say more on this notion,

which, although it had much to support it, was soon universally abandoned.

We are now coming to the age of scientific travellers. In 1734 a member of the French Academy, Otter, was sent out by the Count de Maurepas, Minister and Secretary of State, in order to elucidate by his researches the geography and history of the East. In a map which he appends to his work, he places Nineveh, correctly, opposite Mosul, although he had been slightly confused by the conflicting traditions he found existing among the natives :—

“Abulfeda [the Arabian geographer] says that Nineveh was on the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite the modern Mosul; either he must have been mistaken or the inhabitants of the district are greatly in error, for the latter place Nineveh on the western bank of the Tigris, on the spot which they call Eski-Mosul. If we attempt to conciliate the two opinions by supposing that Nineveh was built on both sides of the river, nothing is gained, for Eski-Mosul is seven or eight leagues higher up the stream. One point seems to favour the belief of Abulfeda, and that is, that opposite Mosul there is a place called Tell-i-Toubah—that is to say, the Hill of Repentance—where, they say, the Ninevites put on sackcloth and ashes to turn away the wrath of God.”

Otter is the first traveller who noticed the Rock of Behistun, with its bas-reliefs and inscriptions, which afterwards played so important a part in the interpretation of the cuneiform characters. He identifies Tak-Kesra, so often mistaken for the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, with the residence of the Sassanian monarchs at Ctesiphon. Finally he reached Hillah :—

“I arrived at Hillah, which Yakut [an Arabian geographer] places in the district of Babel. . . . The city of Babel, or Baby-

lon, formerly the capital of this country, left its name to the whole district."

Unfortunately, though he occupies several pages with an account of the legends that hang about the spot, he gives no description of the ruins, but merely remarks:—

"The Turkish geographer places Babylon near Hillah, on the left of the road as you go to Bagdad. At the present day nothing but a wood is to be seen there."

Probably the fear of Bedouin robbers prevented Otter, like so many others, from visiting the lonely mounds and ridges.

Edward Ives was a military surgeon who travelled overland from India in 1758. He alludes to the common view that Akerkuf represents the Tower of Babel, but does not himself hold it; and he is aware of the inaccuracy of the opinion that Bagdad stood upon the site of Babylon, but he did not visit the true remains of that city. Later, he passed by the ruins of Nineveh and the tomb of Jonah, but is in doubt whether he shall place the true site there or higher up the river, at Eski-Mosul, according to the view held by some, which had caused so much difficulty to his predecessor, Otter.

Another missionary of the Carmelite order, Father Emmanuel de Saint Albert, made a report on the ruins of Babylon to the Duke of Orleans, which aroused interest in France, and, though it was never published, formed the basis of a memoir on the position of Babylon, read in 1755 by D'Anville before the French Academy

of Inscriptions. Hitherto the only real description of any part of the remains near Hillah, which D'Anville finally accepts as the ruins of Babylon, had been Pietro della Valle's account of the mound of Babel. Father Emmanuel had discovered the vast mass of the Birs Nimroud—the position of which Benjamin of Tudela vaguely indicates—on the west bank of the Euphrates, five miles south of Hillah, and thus vindicated the description of the ancient authors, who divided the city into two parts, between which the river ran. D'Anville concludes his memoir, which finally settled the question of the identification of the site of Babylon, by deciding that the existing remains, and the name of Babel, which has never been effaced from the memory of the inhabitants, determine, by their agreement with the distance between Seleucia—the site of which is also now settled—and Babylon, as given by Pliny, Strabo, and others, the question of the position of the latter city. He adds :—

“The written characters which, as Father Emmanuel says in his report, are impressed upon the bricks which remain of buildings so ancient that they may have formed part of the original Babylon, would be, for scholars who wish to penetrate into the most remote antiquity, an entirely new matter of meditation and study.”

It now only remained for others to take up and complete the researches of the Père Emmanuel. The Danish traveller, Carsten Niebuhr, was one of the most learned, intelligent, and accurate of the men who have published accounts of foreign countries; and his book did much towards laying the foundations for

future research into the Persian and Assyrian inscriptions.

It was from Niebuhr's plates of the cuneiform characters at Persepolis that Grotefend, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, first deciphered the names of Darius and Xerxes, and opened the way for all further researches of this kind. On his way home from Persia, in 1765, Niebuhr passed through Bagdad and Mosul, and explored the country which surrounds those two towns. He says:—

“Of Babylon and Nineveh few indications are now to be found. These famous cities lay in marshy regions, where hewn stone was costly, and where bad materials were employed for building, which have long fallen into ruin, or have been carried off to other towns.”

Niebuhr gives a fairly complete description of the mound of Babil, and identifies it with the citadel described by Greek writers. He visited Birs Nimroud, and he identifies it with the Temple of Bel, described by Herodotus and others. Our traveller says much about the inscribed clay bricks which lay about these ruins, and concludes that they contained the records of the Babylonians, such as those of which Pliny speaks. Niebuhr had no difficulty in identifying the site of Nineveh also; the natives pointed out to him a mound called Nunia, on which stood the tomb of the prophet Jonah, and another great mound called Kallah Nunia, or the fortress of Nineveh, on which stood the village of Kainsjag, or Kouyunjik, besides the traces of the walls of the great city; he also speaks of the ruins of Nimroud, eight hours below Mosul. Here we have

a clear and intelligent description of the ancient sites, which, like the rest of the traveller's work, attracted much attention among the learned in Europe, and, above all, induced scholars to take an interest in the inscriptions found upon these famous ruins.

One of the learned priests sent out from Europe to Asiatic Turkey was the Abbé Beauchamp, Vicar-General of Babylon in 1782. His account of his researches among the ruins of the ancient city was published in the *Journal des Savants*, and quickly translated into English in the *European Magazine* of May, 1792. He visited the mound called Babel by Pietro della Valle and Otter, but named by him Makloubé, or the Ruin, according to another popular designation. Besides this, he first called the attention of archæologists to a second mound near the first; he calls it Babel, but it is generally named the Kasr, or palace; some of the stamped bricks of which it is composed he extracted from their bituminous cement, and brought home to Europe. Of Birs Nimroud, which he calls Broussa, he says little, although he had seen it.

In 1794 a physician, named Olivier, was sent out by the French Government to make researches in the Turkish Empire and in Persia. He is very clear as to the site of Nineveh, and says that all modern geographers seem to agree in placing it on the east bank of the Tigris, opposite Mosul. He visited the "Fortress of Nunia," the village of Nunia, in which the tomb of Jonah stands, and the traces of the ancient walls. During his stay in the neighbourhood of Bagdad,

Olivier inspected Tak-Kesra, already identified as the palace of Ctesiphon, and made a survey of the ruins of Babylon, of which he says:—

“The ground on which the city stood, twenty leagues to the south of Bagdad, presents at first sight no trace of a town ; it must be traversed in all directions before certain mounds and slight elevations can be observed, and it is seen that the soil has everywhere been disturbed. The Arabs have been busy here for twelve centuries excavating and extracting bricks, of which Cufa, Bagdad, Meshed Ali, Meshed Hossain, Hillah, and other towns have been built.”

A league north of Hillah, Olivier observed the mound of Babil, which he identifies with the Temple of Belus ; and he found large portions of the ancient brick walls. He was unable—as so many travellers had been before him—to visit Birs Nimroud, which he knew well by report.

In 1812 the ruins of Babylon were for the first time completely examined. Claudius James Rich was appointed political resident for the East India Company at Bagdad in 1808, and his intelligence and learning soon induced him to study the antiquities of the historical region in which his official duties had placed him. In 1812 he visited the site of the great city, carefully studied the disposition of the various mounds, and measured them with equal accuracy ; he was also able to collect some inscriptions on clay tablets and cylinders, which he presented to the British Museum. Ten years later Rich examined the site of Nineveh, and obtained some inscriptions on clay and stone from the mounds of Kouyunjik and Nebi Yunus ; the ruins of Nimroud,

too, alluded to by Niebuhr, were fully described by the British resident.

About the same time Sir Robert Ker Porter, whose work forms one of the most valuable descriptions of modern Persia, paid a visit to the ruins of Babylon in company with Rich, who was already well acquainted with them. He has given us a very full account, to which he adds notes of other old Babylonian sites around Bagdad; some of the inscriptions which he collected are still to be seen in the British Museum.

A few years later Buckingham passed through the ruins both of Nineveh and Babylon, and afterwards published a full account of them.

But we have now reached a period when the sites of these ancient cities begin to be as well known to the learned as the most familiar ruins of Europe. Since Buckingham, detailed descriptions have been given to the world by Botta, Place, Sir H. Layard, Sir H. Rawlinson, and M. Oppert; but it would be useless to examine these one by one.

Early in the present century, then, the sites of Nineveh and Babylon had been fully identified, and the greatest interest had been aroused in Europe by the descriptions of travellers, and by the antiquities which had been brought home from these historical spots, and stored in our museums. It was recognised that some great results must follow if the inscriptions could be deciphered and translated. Pliny had spoken of the ancient records, reaching back to a fabulous antiquity, which were preserved at Babylon upon baked bricks; and here

were some of these very baked bricks at the disposal of any who could read them. Most scholars, when these inscriptions were first found, had looked upon the task as hopeless; the baked bricks from Nineveh and Babylon must remain for ever like the book with seven seals, which no man could open. But in the first years of the century the clue to their interpretation had been found. It did not come from Nineveh or Babylon; it came from the palaces of Persepolis.

CHAPTER II.

THE PALACES OF PERSEPOLIS.

ACCORDING to the Persian poets and historians, Jemsheed was the fourth King of Persia, and ruled the country for seven hundred years. At the beginning of his reign the world was calm, and free from discord; even the spirits and the birds obeyed him. He taught men how to forge iron, and to make helmets, lances, cuirasses, coats of mail, and armour for horses; in this course of instruction he was occupied for fifty years. For another fifty years he employed himself in the manufacture of tissues of linen, silk, wool, beaver's hair; he showed his subjects the art of twisting, spinning, and interlacing threads, of making garments of woven material, and of composing rich brocades. During another fifty years, Jemsheed assembled together the members of the various professions, and formed guilds and castes of priests, warriors, agriculturists, and labourers. Yet another half century was spent in training men to mould bricks, and to build baths, lofty edifices, and palaces; precious stones were sought for, perfumes were distilled, medicines were first compounded; all that had hitherto been unknown was brought to light; never had the world seen so diligent

an investigator of its secrets. During fifty years Jemsheed travelled through all the countries of the earth. On his return, he caused a throne to be erected for himself, encrusted with jewels; and at his order the spirits raised it to the height of the vault of heaven. Here the mighty monarch sat like the sun shining in the zenith; his subjects assembled around his seat, marvelling at his high fortunes. Three hundred years passed, during which not only death, but also pain and distress, were unknown among men; the evil spirits were bound like slaves in the service of the great king; order prevailed throughout mankind, and the world was filled with the sweet sounds of music.

But the king became proud, and revolted against God, saying: "I recognise none in the world besides myself; it is I that have brought the intelligence of mankind into operation; it is through my will that the universe has been set in order; to me you owe your food, your sleep, your tranquillity, your clothing, and all your pleasures. Who dares to say that there is another king besides me?" Then the Divine favour abandoned him; the world was filled with discord; his subjects deserted him, and his power disappeared. A rebel prince took possession of the throne, and, although Jemsheed escaped and lay hid for a hundred years, he was at last seized and sawn in two by the order of his enemy.

The reason for which it seems not unfitting to begin an account of the palaces of Persepolis with the legend of Jemsheed, as told by Firdusi, whose Book

of the Kings is accessible to all in the charming French translation of Jules Mohl, is that for many centuries the Persians have attributed to this hero of the golden age the foundation of the famous structures which form the subject of this chapter. Takht-i-Jemsheed, the Throne of Jemsheed, is the name by which the ruins are known among the natives of the spot; and upon the sculptured walls, where we see the effigies of Darius and Xerxes, they behold with awe the similitude of the primeval monarch and the marvellous events of his Saturnian reign. Although we have to give a more prosaic account of the builders of the palaces, the latter are indeed worthy of the most flourishing epoch of Persian history; and the reader will, it is hoped, forgive the introduction in this place of a detailed account of a unique monument of antiquity.

Thirty miles from the modern town of Shiraz, in South-western Persia, at the foot of Mount Rachmet, part of a range of hills composed of a dark grey limestone marble, which supplies a material for building of the most durable quality, there rises from the plain a vast terrace of irregular dimensions: partly a natural spur of the mountain, partly the work of man. Enclosed in a semi-circular hollow against the hill-side, it has somewhat the appearance of an immense theatre. The western side, nearly fifteen thousand feet in length, which abuts upon the plain, is faced, as well as the two ends, with a wall composed of huge irregular blocks of the local marble, finely polished and fitted together without cement; the height varies in different parts,

but was probably twenty feet in its original state. On the south wall are four huge slabs, bearing cuneiform inscriptions (two in the Persian language, one in Babylonian, and one in Susian), which inform the visitor, as they are now interpreted, that the terrace which he beholds is the work of King Darius, the son of Hystaspes, who implores his god Ahuramazda to protect and preserve the structure. Access from the plain to the summit of the platform is gained by a magnificent staircase of four flights of steps towards the northern end of the western face, occupying a break of forty-five feet in the wall, and consisting of fifty-five steps, three inches and a half in height and twenty-two feet in breadth, so that six horsemen abreast can mount with ease; two diverging flights arrive, half-way from the bottom, at two landings, whence two other flights converge towards the top. On arriving at the summit, the visitor is confronted by two piers of masonry, in which are embedded two colossal figures of bulls: their heads project from the front, one side of their bodies stands out slightly from the inner walls, and the rest is concealed. This is the entrance to the grand porch which formed the vestibule to the whole group of palaces; and cuneiform inscriptions, in Persian, Susian, and Babylonian, on the wall above the bulls inform us of the builder:—

“A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created yonder Heaven, who made man, who made delights for men, who has made Xerxes king, the sole king over many, the sole ruler over many.

"I am Xerxes the great king, the king of kings, king of the countries which contain many races, king henceforward of this vast earth, son of King Darius, the Achæmenid.

"Thus says Xerxes the great king: 'By the grace of Ahuramazda I have built this doorway. Many other fair works in Persia have I and my father made. By the grace of Ahuramazda alone have we executed these fair works.'

"Thus says Xerxes the king: 'May Ahuramazda protect me and my dominions, and the works that I and my father have made. All these may Ahuramazda protect.'"

Further remains of the porch are to be seen at a short distance, first in the shape of two columns seventeen yards high, surmounted by the characteristic Persepolitan capital; secondly, in the bases of two other columns; and lastly, in two more piers forming the egress, in which two colossal figures of bulls, winged, human-headed, and crowned, like the Assyrian monsters of Nineveh, Khorsabad, or Nimroud, are embedded in the same manner as the figures at the entry. This porch was, no doubt, roofed over with cedar beams, and formed a passage, open at the sides and paved with large slabs, through which access was obtained to a courtyard or garden, a single trace of which now remains in a square cistern, to be seen at a short distance.

Turning to the right on emerging from the porch, the visitor sees before him, at a distance of a hundred and fifty feet, the wall of another terrace, rising eight feet above the level on which he is now standing; in the midst of the wall is the famous sculptured staircase, formed of two double converging flights of steps.

The outer wall of the staircase, which forms a triangle between the two central flights, is sculptured with bas-reliefs, representing a file of soldiers of the royal body-guard, five on each side, facing towards the middle; they wear long robes and upright tiaras, and carry spears and bows. Before the sculptures were injured, the winged figure of the god Ahuramazda hovered above the group. In each of the angles formed between the ascending balustrades and the ground, a lion is seen devouring a bull: doubtless a symbol of the destroying power of the Persian monarchy. The inner balustrade exhibits a row of guards as if in the act of ascending the stairs; lotus-flowers and cypresses also enter into the decoration. The wall on each side of the central double staircase—that is to say, the space between it and the other convergent flights to the right and left of it—is occupied by three series of figures one above the other, separated by bands of rosettes. We here see behind a row of the Immortals, or picked troops, officials from all parts of the Persian Empire, in every variety of costume, in the act of being introduced by Court functionaries into the presence of the sovereign, for whom they are bringing gifts of every kind. That Xerxes was the builder of this staircase, which has always been one of the chief wonders of Persepolis, is attested by the inscription on the wall, drawn up, as usually, in three languages.

“A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created yonder Heaven for men, who has made Xerxes king, sole king over many, sole ruler over many. . . .

“Thus says Xerxes, the great king: ‘By the grace of Ahuramazda I have constructed this building; may Ahuramazda protect me and my dominions, and all that I have made.’”

Mounting one of the four flights of steps, the visitor sees before him, at a distance of about fifteen yards, the far-famed group of columns which gave to the ruins of Takht-i-Jemsheed the name by which they were first known in Europe—namely, *Chehel Minar*, or the Forty Minarets. Now, indeed, only thirteen are standing; but originally there were seventy-two tall pillars, supporting a roof of cedar, and forming the *Apadana*, or Throne-Room of Xerxes, similar in plan to the *Apadana* of Artaxerxes Mnemon at Susa, where the inscriptions were found that supplied us with this old Persian name for a hall of the sort. It is the word borrowed by the Prophet Daniel, when he says, “And He shall plant the tabernacles of His *palace* between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.” There were three porticoes, or colonnades, to this throne-room—one on the north side, facing the staircase, one on the east, and another on the west, each supported by twelve columns. The central hall, nearly fifty yards square, was upheld by a phalanx of thirty-six columns. All these pillars were of the characteristic Persepolitan order, only to be found in the palaces of the Achæmenian dynasty founded by Cyrus, which ended with the conquest of Alexander the Great; their height is sixty feet, or thirteen times the diameter at the base, which is formed like a bell, and sculptured with lotus-leaves; from this rises a slender fluted shaft, which

terminates in a composite capital, consisting of a richly-moulded bell, above which is a lotus-flower surmounted by inverted volutes, which sustain a double bull's head projecting on both sides to support the rafters of cedar-wood. There can never have been doors to this hall; embroidered curtains, probably of Babylonian workmanship, hung between the pillars, as they are described in the Book of Esther.

Thirty-five yards behind, or to the south of this great Reception Hall of Xerxes, rises the palace of Darius Hystaspis, standing upon a platform of its own, ten feet in height. The summit of this platform is reached by two sculptured staircases, one of which is decorated with bas-reliefs similar to those of the larger and more famous staircase of Xerxes; the ornaments of the other vary in design. On ascending, we find the remains of a building that was evidently no mere hall of audience, like the *Apadana* of seventy-two columns, but was the actual habitation of the king; and that this king was Darius is proved by a trilingual inscription on one of the doorposts, above a bas-relief which represents the sovereign in state, surrounded by courtiers:—

“Darius, the great king, the king of kings, the king of the world, the son of Hystaspes, built this house.”

Xerxes, the successor of Darius, added two other inscriptions on the staircase and on a pier of masonry; in these, after the usual ascription of praise to Ahuramazda and the enumeration of his own titles, he adds:—

“Thus says Xerxes, the great king : ‘By the grace of Ahuramazda, Darius, my father, erected this building. May Ahuramazda protect me and this my work, and the work of my father ; all this may Ahuramazda protect !’ ”

The walls of this palace, undoubtedly of brick, have entirely disappeared ; the material has been pillaged for the construction of more recent towns or villages ; but the doorways, window-frames, and corner piers, built of the dark grey marble of Mount Rachmet, are still standing, and enable us to trace out the plan of the edifice. There was a central hall, supported by sixteen columns, and entered through a portico of eight columns ; around the central chamber were fourteen small rooms of various forms and dimensions. The doorways and windows have projecting cornices, slightly hollowed out like those of Egyptian temples, and carved with a triple row of lotus-leaves ; on the inner sides of the doorways and on the corner piers are bas-reliefs which represent the king in close combat with a lion or a bull, or attended by officers bearing the umbrella and the fly-flap—ensigns of royalty that the Persian monarchs had borrowed from Assyria. Round some of the window-frames are cuneiform inscriptions giving the name and title of the monarch :—

“Darius, the great king, the king of the world, the king of kings, the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenid.”

To the south of the palace of Darius, and in a corner of the terrace, stood the palace of Artaxerxes Ochus, also raised upon a small platform of its own, and identified by an inscription on the sculptured

staircase, in which this monarch names himself as the builder :—

“A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created yonder Heaven, who made man, who created delights for men, who has made me, Artaxerxes, sole king over many, sole ruler over many.

“Thus says Artaxerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of all countries, the king of this world : ‘I am Artaxerxes, son of Artaxerxes the king, who was the son of Darius the king, who was the son of Artaxerxes the king, who was the son of Xerxes the king, who was the son of Darius the king, who was the son of Hystaspes, who was the son of Arsames, an Achæmenid ; this lofty building of stone have I made for myself.’

“Thus says Artaxerxes the king : ‘May Ahuramazda and the god Mithras protect me and this land, and all that I have made !’”

Another copy of the same inscription is to be found on the western staircase of Darius Hystaspis, whose palace was thus appropriated, and perhaps restored, by Artaxerxes. Very little is left of the edifice erected by Ochus ; the chief parts that remain are portions of the staircase and of the wall which surrounds the platform, besides some traces of columns. The scenes represented in the bas-reliefs of the staircase seem to have resembled those on the other monuments of the kind ; they exhibited a procession of officials bearing presents for their sovereign, among which tusks of ivory were conspicuous.

To the east of the habitation of Artaxerxes Ochus was the larger palace of Xerxes, about eighty yards by seventy in area, standing on its own platform at the extremity of the same terrace. As in the case of the house of Darius, we are enabled to judge of the general

plan of this building also from the doorways, window-frames, and corner piers that still remain, although the intermediate brick-work and the timber roofing have altogether disappeared. Two staircases, with the usual bas-reliefs, conduct the visitor to a portico, upborne by twelve columns, and leading into a central hall of thirty-six columns, on each side of which are small apartments opening into it, to the number of twelve. The doorways are sculptured in the same fashion as those of Darius. An inscription on the staircase names Xerxes as the constructor of this palace; it begins with the usual praise of Ahuramazda, followed by the titles of the king, and concludes thus:—

“Thus says Xerxes, the great king: ‘This that I have made here, and all that I have elsewhere made, I have made through the grace of Ahuramazda. May Ahuramazda protect me and my kingdom and all that I have made!’”

Eastwards from the house of Darius, on the terrace which the visitor first reached, and therefore on a lower level than the group of buildings that has just been described, stands a small *Apadana*, of which nothing but the bases of a few pillars and some other fragments now remain. South of this is the great *Apadana* of the Hundred Columns. Of the pillars which upheld this vast hall, in which, perhaps, Alexander held his banquet on the fatal night which ended in the conflagration that ruined these splendid palaces, only the bases now remain, but most of the doorways, window-frames, and piers of masonry which formed the corners are still in place. On one doorway the king is sculp-

tured sitting upon his throne under an embroidered canopy; the platform on which the throne is raised is supported by three rows of carved figures, one above the other. On one of the piers the throne is seen sustained by ten rows of five *doryphori*, or soldiers of the body-guard. In each case the winged figure of the god Ahuramazda hovers above the earthly sovereign, who relies upon his protection. In other doorways the king is seen in close combat with a bull, a lion, or a winged gryphon. The entrance to this immense hall of audience was guarded by two colossal human-headed bulls, of which portions still exist.

Close behind these palaces, on the face of the mountain, are the two royal tombs alluded to by Diodorus which gave rise to the name "Royal Mountain." A sculptured façade, exhibiting the king before a fire-altar upon a platform supported by several rows of figures, leads into a small chamber in which the sarcophagus was deposited. The spot where Darius was buried, now called Naksh-i-Rustam, seems also to have been named the Royal Mountain, although situated at some distance from the palaces.

We have now made the tour of these magnificent ruins, which, indeed, form one of the finest monuments of antiquity, and hold in many respects an unique position. Of the great palaces of Assyria, buried as they are under mountains of rubbish, little but the lower portion of the walls is now to be traced by the excavator; but at Persepolis we have the very doors, windows, and columns still standing above

ground, and in the same position as when first erected. In Egypt we have, indeed, vast temples and tombs of far greater antiquity than the residences of Darius and Xerxes, but no royal palace has been preserved to us. Some of the Greek temples are as old as the buildings of the Achæmenids, but, as in Egypt, it was the dwellings of the gods, not of men, that were constructed with sufficient durability to withstand the ravages of time. Only on the Roman Palatine do we see a group of imperial habitations which may remind us of the Persian palaces; but even there the bare brick walls, the fragmentary pavements of porphyry, and the broken marble balustrades have far less to teach us than the sculptured doorways and monumental staircases of Persepolis.

Very little is said of Persepolis in ancient authors; we only gather that, under the Achæmenian dynasty, which began with Cyrus, and ended with Darius Codomannus, there was in this city a splendid royal residence, strongly fortified, and containing the wealth gradually amassed by the Persian kings. When Alexander took the place, in B.C. 330, a treasure of gold and silver, equal in value to a hundred and twenty thousand talents of silver, fell into his hands, and the Macedonian invader was forced to send to Susa and Babylonia for a sufficient number of mules and camels to carry off the booty. Afterwards, in a drunken revel, or in revenge for the ravages of Xerxes in Greece, Alexander and his companions set fire to the palace, which was partly destroyed. The description of the

palace given by Diodorus was, however, sufficient to enable scholars, after many controversies, to decide that the ruins which we have been describing were, without doubt, the remains of the Achæmenian residence; and this was finally proved when the cuneiform inscriptions upon the walls were at last deciphered. The question of the origin of these structures was in former days much confused by the legends which had grown up among the natives of the spot with regard to the ruined edifices which attracted their wonder and admiration from generation to generation. The name of Persepolis was soon lost: indeed, it may never have existed except in the mouths of the Greeks, who thus spoke of the city of the Persians; during the Middle Ages the town in the neighbourhood of the ruins was called Istakhar. So the poet Firdusi, in the tenth century of our era, says that "Alexander marched to the town of Istakhar, and there placed upon his head the glorious crown of the Keianids"—that is to say, the Achæmenids. In another place Firdusi speaks of Istakhar as "the diadem of the kings and the glory of Persia." The ruined palaces themselves have received various names from the natives. The authentic tradition which preserved the name Khaneh-i-Dara, or House of Darius, has not been generally accepted among them. The purely descriptive designation of *Chehel Minar*, or the Forty Minarets, seems to have been current in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries; forty is, of course, a round number, and the name alludes to the columns of the Hall of Xerxes, the

slender and lofty pillars which at once strike the eye of the traveller as he advances across the plain. But the ordinary and constant appellation is that which was indicated at the beginning of the chapter: namely, Takht-i-Jemsheed.

Misled by this, even learned Europeans, before the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions, have sometimes fancied that the sculptured scenes might have been intended by builders of some unknown date to represent the legendary monarch, his court, and his army; and in this way they have failed to understand the true period to which the remains belong.

Besides the opinion which attributed the ruins of Persepolis to Jemsheed, there were other legends as to their origin. Some thought that Solomon, who was indeed sometimes identified with Jemsheed, had built these imposing structures; for instance, a Persian writer of the thirteenth century, who says:—

“At Istakhar there is a very considerable Fire-temple; the Magians affirm that this edifice was a *Masjed*, or Temple of Solomon, on whom be the peace of God. I have been there and beheld wonderful structures: marble columns of great height and extraordinary appearance, and on the summits of these columns huge figures carved in stone; and this lofty edifice stands near the foot of the mountain.”

Solomon, whose command over all nature is so widely celebrated among the Mahometans, is believed to have employed demons to erect this palace, as well as the Temple of Baalbek, in Syria; and the king, who could transport himself with ease to a great distance in a short time, frequently spent the day at Baalbek and the night at Istakhar.

According to another account, found in a Persian history, the ruins of Persepolis were neither the work of man nor of demons, but were a monument of a terrible judgment of God:—

“The people of Istakhar were very wicked, and the Almighty turned them into stone; so that even now we may behold there the forms of women reposing with their husbands, of butchers cutting meat into pieces, of infants in their cradles, of bread in ovens, and of many other things, all become marble.”

The people upon whom this miraculous destruction came are identified by other Eastern writers with the tribe of Ad, so well known to all Mahometans through the frequent mention of them in the Koran; they refused to listen to the voice of the prophet who was sent to them, and accordingly they were all destroyed at one stroke, and their deserted city remained a witness to all generations of the punishment incurred by those who reject the messengers of God. Mahomet made use of this story to warn and terrify those among the Arabs who were inclined to doubt his own mission.

To mediæval Europe Persia was even more of an unknown land than Assyria and Babylonia. As soon, however, as intercourse took place between the ancient dominions of Cyrus and the modern world, the remains of the palaces at the foot of Mount Rachmet were quickly discovered, because they lay near the high road from Shiraz to Ispahan, generally traversed by visitors from the West to the Persian court. Accordingly, an account of them is given—the first on record—by

Giosafat Barbaro, a Venetian envoy despatched by the Republic, in A.D. 1472, to the court of Uzun-Cassan. Barbaro had no idea of the real date or character of the Persepolitan ruins : he follows the legend which attributed them to Solomon ; but his remarks are worth quoting, on account of the priority of his testimony.

“Near the town of Camara is seen a circular mountain, which on one side appears to have been cut and made into a terrace, six paces high. On the summit of this terrace is a flat space, and around are forty columns, which are called Cilminar, which means in our tongue Forty Columns, each of which is twenty cubits long, as thick as the embrace of three men ; some of them are ruined, but, to judge from that which can still be seen, this was formerly a beautiful building. The terrace is all of one piece of rock, and upon it stand sculptured figures of animals as large as giants, and above them is a figure like those by which, in our country, we represent God the Father, enclosed in a circle, and holding a ring in His hand ; underneath are other smaller figures. In front is the figure of a man leaning on his bow, which is said to be a figure of Solomon. Below are many others which seem to support those above them, and among these is one who seems to wear on his head a papal mitre, and holds up his open hand, apparently with the intention of giving his benediction to those below, who look up to him, and seem to stand in a certain expectation of the said benediction. Beyond this, there is a tall figure on horseback, apparently that of a strong man : this they say is Samson, near whom are many other figures dressed in the French fashion and wearing long cloaks ; all these figures are in half relief. Two days’ journey from this place there is a village called Thimar ; and two days’ farther off another village, where there is a tomb in which they say the mother of Solomon was buried. Over this is built an edifice in the form of a chapel, and there are Arabic letters upon it, which say, as we understand from the inhabitants of the place, Messer Suleimen, which means in our tongue Temple of Solomon, and its gate looks towards the East.”

The figure of God the Father is, of course, the representation of Ahuramazda hovering over his

devotees, and that which appears to give the benediction is the king, surrounded by his courtiers, and holding up his hand with a gesture of command.

Of all the Oriental monarchs of any age, few have been better known to Europe than Shah Abbas the Great, who reigned in Persia from A.D. 1582 to 1627. Quite a group of Europeans gathered at his court, and published reports of what they saw and heard, either in the quality of ambassadors and political envoys or of religious missionaries, or simply as guests who enjoyed his generous hospitality. Antonio de Gouvea, Anthony and Robert Sherley, Cartwright, Silva y Figueroa, Sir Thomas Herbert, Sir Dodmore Cotton, and Pietro della Valle are among the visitors to Shah Abbas who have done most to acquaint us with his character and the history of his reign. Antonio de Gouvea was an Augustinian friar of Portuguese nationality, who was sent in 1602 by Philip III., King of Spain and Portugal, in company with some other friars, partly to spread the doctrines of Christianity among the Persians, and also with the political purpose of inducing the Shah to make war upon the Turks, those dreaded enemies of all the Christian Powers of Europe. In this latter object, at any rate, the diplomatic friar was successful, for Abbas was induced, by promises of support from the West, to engage in a campaign against the Sultan Mahomet, which seriously weakened the resources of the Ottoman Empire; but, what is more to our purpose, the Portuguese missionary published a narrative of his journey to Ispahan, in which he announced the

existence of the palace, or, as he supposed, the tomb of Persepolis, recognising, although in a vague manner, its true period; and, above all, not forgetting to mention the inscriptions in unknown characters upon the walls.

“We continued our journey as far as a village called Chelminirâ, which in their language means Forty Minarets, because that was the number in the tomb of an ancient king which stood there. . . . We went to see the tomb of which I have spoken, and it is my firm belief that the mausoleum which Artemisia erected to her husband was not more notable, though it is held as one of the wonders of the world; but the mausoleum has been destroyed by time, which seems to have no power against this monument, which has also resisted the efforts of human malice. . . . The place is between two high ridges, and the tomb of which I have made mention is at the foot of the northern ridge. Those who say that Cyrus rebuilt the city of Shiraz affirm also that he built for himself this famous tomb. There are indications that Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes, erected it for himself, besides another near it which he made for Queen Vashti; and this opinion is made more probable by the consideration of the short distance from this site to the city of Suzis, or Shushan, in which he generally resided. . . . At the foot of the ridge began two staircases facing one another, with many steps made of stones, of so great a size that it will be beyond belief when I affirm that some of them, when they were first hewn, were more than twenty-five palms in circumference, ten or twelve broad, and six or eight high; and of these, there were very many throughout the whole structure, for the building was chiefly composed of them; and it was no small wonder to consider how they could have been placed one upon the other, particularly in the columns, where the stones were larger than in any other part. That which astonished us most was to see that certain small chapels were made of a single stone: doorway, pavement, walls, and roof. . . . The staircases of which I have spoken met on a broad landing, from which the whole plain was visible. The walls of the staircases were entirely covered with figures in relief, of workmanship so excellent that I doubt whether it could be surpassed; and by ascending the staircases access was gained to an extensive terrace,

on which stood the forty columns which give their name to the place, each formed, in spite of their great size, of no more than three stones. . . . The bases might be thirty palms round, and on the columns were beautifully carved figures. The porches through which the terrace was entered were very high and the walls very thick; at each end stood out figures of lions and other fierce animals, carved in relief in the same stone: so well executed that they seemed to be endeavouring to terrify the spectators. The likeness of the king was drawn of life-size upon the porches and in many other parts.

"From this place was an ascent to another much higher, where was a chamber excavated in the hill-side, which must have been intended to contain the king's body, although the natives, imagining that it contained a different treasure, have broken into it, having little respect for the ancient memory of him who constructed it. . . .

"The inscriptions—which relate the foundation of the edifice, and, no doubt, also declare the author of it, although they remain in many parts very distinct, yet there is none that can read them, for they are not in Persian, nor Arabic, nor Armenian, nor Hebrew, which are the languages current in those parts; and thus all helps to blot out the memory of that which the ambitious king hoped to make eternal. And because the hardness of the material of which it is built still resists the wear of time, the inhabitants of the place, ill-treated or irritated by the numbers of visitors who came to see this wonder, set to work to do it as much injury as they could, taking as much trouble, perhaps, to deface it as the builders had done to erect it. The hard stone has resisted the effect of fire and steel, but not without showing signs of injury."

Probably through the fact that Gouvea wrote in Portuguese (a language never widely known in Europe), his account of Persepolis has generally been overlooked, and his priority as a discoverer has rarely been acknowledged, although some of the writers of his period speak of him as one of the most distinguished travellers of his age. His influence with the Shah was so great that the latter assigned to him and to those who

accompanied him one of the disused palaces of Ispahan; and here the Augustinian friars continued to reside for many years, showing hospitality to European visitors, and doing what they could to make the doctrines of Christianity known among the Mahometans. Their house is described as large enough to lodge a hundred persons, and as containing a handsome chapel, and many rooms painted with blue and gold, which opened on to a garden, where fountains played in basins of marble. Gouvea's narrative of his travels was, however, soon superseded by that of Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa, ambassador from Philip III. of Spain to Shah Abbas. In 1619 Silva addressed a letter to his friend, the Marquess de Bedmar, then residing at the Court of the Spanish Regent of the Netherlands. This letter, dated from Ispahan, 1619, was printed at Antwerp in 1620; it was quickly translated from the Latin into English, and made known to our countrymen by its publication in Purchas' *Pilgrims*, in 1625. It contains the following passages:—

“There are yet remayning most of those huge wilde buildings of the Castle and Palace of Persepolis, so much celebrated in the monuments of ancient writers. These frames do the Arabians and Persians in their owne language call Chilminara: which is as much as if you should say in Spanish *Quarenta Columnas*, or *Alcoranes*: for so they call those high narrow round steeples which the Arabians have in their Mesquites. This rare, yea and onely monument of the World (which farre exceedeth all the rest of the World's miracles that we have seen or heard of), sheweth it selfe to them that come to this Citie from the Towne of Xiria, and standeth about a league from the River Bandamir, in times past called Araxis (not that which parteth Media from the greater Armenia),

whereof often mention is made by Q. Curtius, Diodorus, and Plutarch: which Authors doe point us oute the situation of Persepolis, and doe almost leade us unto it by the hand. The largenesse, fairnesse, and long-lasting Matter of those Pillars appeareth by the twentie which are yet left of alike fashion; which with other remaynders of those stately Piles do move admiration in the minde of beholders, and cannot but with much labour and at leisure be layed open. But since it is your Lordships hap to live now at Venice, where you may see some resemblance of the things which I am about to write of, I will briefly tell you that most of the pictures of men, that, ingraven in marble, doe seele the front, the sides and statelier parts of this building, are decked with a very comely cloathing, and clad in the same fashion which the Venetian Magnificoes goe in: that is, Gownes downe to the heeles with wide sleeves, with round flat caps, their hair spred to the shoulders, and notable long beards. Yee may see in these tables some men sitting with great maiestie in certayne loftier chayres, such as use to bee with us in the Quires and Chapter-Houses of Cathedrall Churches, appointed for the seates of the chiefe Prelates; the seate being supported with a little foote-stoole neatly made, about a hand high. And, which is very worthy of wonder in so divers dresses of so many men as are ingraven in these tables, none cometh neere the fashion which is at this day, or hath beene these many Ages past, in use through all Asia. For though out of all Antiquitie we can gather no such arguments of the cloathing of Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, as we finde many of the Greekes and Romanes; yet it appeareth sufficiently that they used garments of a middle size for length, like the Punike vest used by the Turks and Persians at this day, which they call Aljuba, and these Cavaia: and shashes round about their heads, distinguished yet both by fashion and colour from the Cidaris, which is the Royall Diademe. Yet verily in all this sculpture (which, though it be ancient, yet shineth as neatly as if it were but new-done) you can see no picture that is like or in the workmanship resembleth any other, which the memorie of man could yet attaine to the knowledge of from any part of the World: so that this worke may seeme to exceede all Antiquities. Now nothing more confirmeth this than one notable Inscription cut in a Jasper table, with characters still so freshe and faire that one would wonder how it could scape so many Ages without touch of the least blemish.

The Letters themselves are neither Chaldæan, nor Hebrew, nor Greeke, nor Arabike, nor of any other Nation which was ever found of old, or at this day to be extant. They are all three-cornered, but somewhat long, of the forme of a Pyramide, or such a little Obeliske as I have set in the margin (Δ) ; so that in nothing do they differ from one another but in their placing and situation, yet so conformed that they are wondrous plaine, distinct, and perspicuous. What kind of building the whole was (whether Corinthian, Ionick, or mixt) cannot be gathered from the remaynder of these ruines : which is otherwise in the old broken walls at Rome, by which that may easily be discerned. Notwithstanding the wondrous and artificall exactnesse of the worke, the beautie and elegancy of it shining out of the proportion and symmetrie, doth dazzle the eyes of the beholders. But nothing amazed me more than the hardnesse and durablenesse of these Marbles and Jaspers ; for in many places there are Tables so solide, and so curiously wrought and polished that ye may see your face in them as in a glasse. Besides the Authors by me already commended, Arrianus and Justine make special mention of this Palace ; and they report that Alexander the Great (at the instigation of Thaïs) did burne it downe. But most delicately of all doth Diodorus deliver this storie.

“The whole Castle was encompassed with a threefold circle of walls, the greater part whereof hath yielded to the time and weather. There stand also the Sepulchres of their kings, placed on the side of that hill, at the foote whereof the Castle itself is built ; and the monuments stand just so farre from one another as Diodorus reporteth. In a worde, all doth so agree with his discourse of it that he that hath seene this and read that cannot possibly be deceived.”

Much attention was attracted by this account of the ruins, which is indeed less complete than a report on them by Pietro della Valle in a letter to Mario Schipano, dated from Shiraz, 1616, but not published till 1650, thirty years after Silva's epistle to the Marquess de Bedmar. What most distinguishes Della Valle's narrative is that he actually gives a copy of five of the cuneiform characters engraved on the

walls of the ruined palaces, and has the sagacity to infer that they were read from left to right; the signs which he gives us are part of the title of Darius and Xerxes, which has now been interpreted as "King of Kings." In the last year of Abbas (1627), Sir Thomas Herbert was in Persia with the English Ambassador, Sir Dodmore Cotton, and he afterwards published an account of Chehel-minar, with a copy of a few of the cuneiform, or, as he calls them, pyramidal characters. These antiquities had now excited so much interest that a representation of them was greatly desired in Europe. Sir Thomas Herbert says:—

"Is it not greater pity that some Illustrious Prince or other Noble Person valuing rarities has not ere this sent some painter or other like artist to take a full and perfect draught of this so ancient Monument? the rather seeing that the Inhabitants of Shyras, but principally the Villagers at Mardash and other People thereabouts, put no value upon it; but contrarily in barbarous manner spare not to deface and tear asunder what they can in spight, and under pretence of serving their common occasions. . . . I may here with thankfulness acknowledge how that, upon my proposing it some years since unto that great Mæcenas of antiquity, the late noble Lord Thomas, Earl of Arundel, he was so sensible thereof as to that end he dispatched a Youth thither, whom Mr. Norgate recommended to his Lordship for one he knew could both design and copy well. But I hear he died by the way at or near Surat, before he could reach Persia; so as that worthy endeavour became frustrate."

Other travellers visited the site of Persepolis about this time: for instance, Cartwright, Boullaye-le-Gouz, Mandelslo, Tavernier, Thévenot, Daulier Deslandes; and they all give more or less correct accounts of the remains, and express various opinions about their

origin. Daulier Deslandes is to be distinguished as having, in his *Beautez de la Perse*, published at Paris, 1673, given a fairly accurate engraving of the palaces of Persepolis, on too small a scale, however, to allow the details to be seen.

In 1666 our English Royal Society had issued a series of inquiries relative to the antiquities and physical conditions of various countries, answers to which were earnestly desired by the learned in the cause of science. One of these inquiries demands:—

“Whether, there being already good Descriptions in Words of the Excellent Pictures and Basse Relieves that are about Persepolis at Chilmenar, yet none very particular, some may not be found sufficiently skilled in those parts, that might be engaged to make a Draught of the Place and the Stories there pictured and carved.”

In consequence of this inquiry, a merchant named Flower, who in the course of his professional journeys to the East took the opportunity of paying a visit to the ruins, made a copy of some of the inscriptions there; but, unfortunately, he was attacked by disease, and died in Syria, and his papers, communicated to the Royal Society in 1693, only gave a very imperfect answer to the question which that learned body had propounded.

In consequence of the general desire of a representation of Persepolis, and the difficulty of actually procuring one, an eccentric Dutchman, named Struys, published a view and description of the remains in 1686, in his work entitled “Three Remarkable and most Disastrous Journeys through Italy, Greece,

Livonia, Muscovy, Tartary, Media, Persia, East India, Japan, and various other Countries." Some writers have gone so far as to assert that Struys was an impostor, who never left the flats and dykes of Holland ; at any rate, he never saw Persepolis. His plate represents a marvellous building, in which Turkish domes and classical columns are combined in a fashion never seen in any earthly structure ; if he had even carefully read the reports of his contemporaries, he could never have made such a blunder as this.

The first complete book of travels in Persia is the production of Chardin, who was in the East between 1664 and 1677 ; in his famous work he not only published a full description of Chehel-minar, but also gave numerous plates, representing the ruins and some of the inscriptions. Chardin, however, would not accept the view of Silva y Figueroa and Della Valle that the remains are part of a palace of Darius ; the spot would, he fancies, have been too much exposed to the heat to have been chosen as a dwelling-place ; it was probably a temple, he thinks, especially as the bas-reliefs appear to have a religious character. As for the date of the edifice, he adopts the Persian tradition, which ascribes it to Jemsheed, accepting the latter as an historical personage, who must have lived about the time of Jacob. So do the doctors differ ! An equally remote antiquity was ascribed to Chehel-minar by Engelbert Kaempfer, a German physician and good Persian scholar, who returned from the East in 1694, and wrote a Latin work on Persia and other parts of Asia, in which he gives

plates of the ruins and of some of the inscriptions, to which he was the first to assign the name of cuneiform. He says :—

“The southern wall [of the terrace] . . . exhibits an inscription in strange characters, which have the form of small wedges (*cuneoli*), such as are not to be found in any other part of the world, except in the chambers of the same palace ; nor can they be understood at present by any human being.”

An illustrious successor of Chardin and Kaempfer was the Dutchman Cornelis de Bruin, who started for the East in 1701, and on his return gave to the world a full account of his journeys, including plates drawn by himself of Persepolis and of some of the inscriptions. De Bruin rejects the theories of the two former travellers on the origin of the remains, saying :—

“I think we may conclude that the ruins of Chilminar are those of the famous palace of Persepolis which was destroyed by Alexander the Great.”

In justice to our countrymen, a work must here be mentioned which was published in London in 1739. It is “*Persepolis Illustrata*,” and contains twenty-one engravings on copper-plates of the palaces, accompanied by a description of them, and a lithographed account of the ancient authors who have written upon them. Considering the period, we must allow that the engravings do credit to the artists, but they are incomplete and full of mistakes in details. A fairly correct view is taken of the date of the buildings.

All former travellers were eclipsed by Niebuhr (1765), whose drawings and copies of the ruins and

inscriptions henceforward formed the material that scholars could best rely upon, and whose opinions upon all the subjects of which he treats are accurate and scholarly. No new information was supplied by the Count Ferrières Sauvebœuf (1782), who saw little to admire in the Achæmenian palace, or by Francklin, who journeyed from Bengal to Persia in 1786, and is inclined to accept the native legends about the origin of the remains. One remark of Francklin is worth recording, as it has been partly justified by events :—

“ I should presume that until the ancient characters on the walls can be decyphered, no account of this place, either Grecian or Persian, or any other, can be depended upon as genuine or authentic, as they are unquestionably of an antiquity far beyond the records of any language now known in the world.”

At this time, then, the end of the eighteenth century, the learned world of Europe possessed a fairly complete knowledge of the ruins of Persepolis and of the inscriptions upon them. The time was come for the decipherer to arise. Since this date other travellers have visited Persia, and have corrected and added to the information already possessed. Sir Robert Ker Porter, especially, published copies of the inscriptions more correct even than those of Niebuhr; Morier, who accompanied the embassy of Sir Harford Jones, added much useful information; Sir William Ouseley, who accompanied his brother's embassy in 1810, through his great knowledge of Persian, supplied us with many interesting facts; and Buckingham must not be omitted. Then came the French expedition sent out

by Louis Philippe in 1839, during which MM. Flandin and Coste made the drawings which they published in their magnificent work. Lastly, M. Dieulafoy and Dr. Stolze have completed our knowledge by their works on the "Ancient Art of Persia" and on "Persepolis."

CHAPTER III.

DECIPHERMENT OF THE OLD PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

WHEN it was made known in Europe that inscriptions in an unknown character had been found at the ruins of Chehel-minar, identified by some with the ancient palace of the Achæmenian monarchs at Persepolis, much interest was excited among the learned, but the idea of interpreting the mysterious sentences was generally given up as hopeless. The native Persians believed that the writing on the walls contained the key which, if discovered, would open the door to the treasures buried beneath; for all ancient ruins are supposed in the East to contain hidden wealth. It must not be omitted, however, that some of the natives seem to have made attempts to decipher the writing, and to have preserved a correct notion of its nature and origin; for in a Persian manuscript, the contents of which were communicated by Lord Teignmouth to Sir William Ouseley in 1798, there is a list of cuneiform characters, many of them, it is true, of imaginary form, but all composed of wedges in different positions, and some actually found at Persepolis; and the modern Persian letters supposed to correspond to them are added beneath. The whole scheme is absolutely inaccurate,

but it is worth quoting, in order to show that an attempt at the decipherment of their ancient characters had been made by the modern Persians; and still more on account of the title placed at the head of the list: "The Alphabet of the Zoroastrians, or Fire-worshippers, which was introduced in the latter part of the reign of Gushtasp."* Now, Gushtasp, or Hystaspes, is generally understood to represent Darius, son of Hystaspes, in whose time (there are many reasons for believing) the cuneiform characters were actually brought into use in Persia. No other attempt to explain the inscriptions has been made, so far as it is known, by the natives of the country.

The first European who noticed the inscriptions was Antonio de Gouvea, the Portuguese friar, who, as we have seen in the last chapter, correctly surmised that they contained records of the builder of the edifice, who wished in this way to preserve the memory of his name. But many travellers preferred less obvious and more far-fetched theories of the meaning of the lines. Sir Thomas Herbert (1626) seems to have thought that they might have been engraved by order of the prophet Daniel himself:—

"There is [on the wall of the terrace] a Jasper or Marble Table, about twenty feet from the pavement, wherein are inscribed about twenty lines of character, every line being a yard and a half broad, or thereabouts; all of them very perfect to the eye, and the stone so well polished that it still preserves its lustre. The characters are of a strange and unusual shape, neither like Letters nor Hieroglyphicks; yea, so far from our deciphering that we could not so

* Sir W. Ouseley in "Oriental Collections," Jan.—March, 1798, p. 57.

much as make any positive judgment whether they were words or characters ; albeit, I rather incline to the first, and that they comprehend words or syllables, as in Brachyography or Short-writing we familiarly practise. Nor indeed could we judge whether the Writing were from the right hand to the left, according to the Chaldee and usual manner of these Oriental Countreys ; or from the left hand to the right, as the Greeks, Romans, and other Nations imitating their alphabets have accustomed. Nevertheless by the posture and tendency of some of the characters (which consist of several magnitudes) it may be supposed that this writing was rather from the left hand to the right, as the Armenian and Indian do at this day. And concerning the Characters, albeit I have since compared them with the twelve several alphabets in Postellus, and after that with those eight and fifty different Alphabets I find in Purchas, which indeed comprehend all or most of the various forms of letters that either now are or at any time have been in use through the greater part of the Universe, I could not perceive that these had the least resemblance or coherence with any of them, which is very strange, and certainly renders it the greater curiosity ; and, therefore, well worthy the scrutiny of some ingenious Persons that delight themselves in this dark and difficult art or exercise of deciphering. For how obscure soever these seemed to us, without doubt they were at some time understood, and peradventure by Daniel, who probably might be the surveyor and instruct the Architector of this Palace, as he was of those memorable Buildings at Shushan and Ecbatan ; for it is very likely that this structure was raised by Astyages or his Grandson, Cyrus, and it is acknowledged that this great Prophet (who likewise was a Civil Officer in highest trust and repute during those great revolutions of State under the mighty Monarchs Nebuchodonosor, Belshazzar, Astyages, Darius, and Cyrus) had his mysterious characters. So as how incommunicable soever these Characters be to us (for they bear the resemblance of pyramids inverted or with bases upwards, Triangles or Deltas), yet doubtless in the Age they were engraven they were both legible and intelligible, and it is not to be imagined that they were there placed either to amuse or to delude the spectators ; for it cannot be denied but that the Persians in those primitive times had Letters peculiar to themselves which differed from those of all other Nations. However, I have thought fit to insert a few of these for better demonstration,

which, nevertheless, whiles they cannot be read, will in all probability, like the *Mene Tekel*, without the help of a Daniel, hardly be interpreted." *

Mandelslo (1636) appears to believe that the inscriptions are talismans, and conceal secrets which time will disclose.

At the end of the seventeenth century, although the accounts of travellers showed the existence of many inscriptions of considerable length among the ruins of Chehel-minar, the only copies that had reached Europe were five characters published by Della Valle in 1650, three lines very inaccurately given by Sir Thomas Herbert, and two equally inaccurate lines printed from Flower's copy in the "Philosophical Transactions" of June, 1693. This was all that the learned Dr. Hyde, who occupied two chairs at Oxford—as Regius Professor of Hebrew and Laudian Professor of Arabic—had seen when, in 1700, he published his opinion that the cuneiform or pyramidal figures engraved upon the walls of Persepolis were not writing, but simply an ornamental device, introduced by the architect as part of the decoration of the building. He explains himself thus :—

"There are some who think it necessary to suppose that these pyramidal figures express letters, of which words are composed. In my opinion, however, they are not letters, and were not intended for letters ; but they were engraved simply for the sake of ornament, by a mere whim of the original architect of the palace when it was first erected, which induced him to try how many different figures he

* "Some Yeares Travels into divers parts of Africa and Asia the Great," etc., p. 141 ff.

could compose by arranging strokes of the same form in a variety of positions." *

This theory of Hyde's, which was certainly an easy mode of solving the difficult problem of the meaning of the cuneiform characters, resembles the view of the Abbé Tandeau on the nature of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, expounded in a work entitled "A Dissertation on the Hieroglyphic Writing," and published about the middle of the eighteenth century. According to the Abbé, the figures with which the obelisks and temples on the Nile are covered are not a form of writing, as had generally been supposed, but simply ornamental designs carved by the architect upon the granite, with no other purpose than that of decoration; it was only in later years that the priests, anxious to find a new means of support for their religion, interpreted the various figures as containing the mysteries of their creed, which were thus concealed beneath symbolic characters of immemorial antiquity.

A view similar to those of Hyde and Tandeau was, at the end of the last century, and therefore on the eve of the actual decipherment of the inscriptions, expounded by Samuel Witte, a professor in the University of Rostock, who maintained that we have at Persepolis elementary designs of flowers in bouquets and garlands:—

"It is impossible to say exactly what sort of flowers are here intended to be represented; this, however, is not necessary: it is enough to state the general principle. Yet, in order to show the

* "*Historia Religionis veterum Persarum*," etc., 1700, p. 526.

possibility that flowers are here designed, we may compare those that have a funnel-shaped blossom, such as the wild convolvulus, the larger and smaller pansies, the common tobacco with tongue-shaped petals, and even the different kinds of carnation."

Kaempfer, whose work was published in 1712, was the first to be struck by a superficial resemblance of the cuneiform character to the Chinese—an idea which occurred to many after his time. The resemblance consists chiefly in the form of the wedge-shaped strokes, thick at one end and pointed at the other, which is in reality an accidental rather than an essential feature of the two systems of writing; the Chinese character is written or painted with a brush, and the cuneiform was generally impressed on clay with a stick; hence the shape of the strokes. It has been remarked that certain Greek inscriptions have a cuneiform appearance, due to the greater facility of engraving strokes of the shape described. Kaempfer says:—

"On the southern wall of the terrace is an inscription in strange characters, having the form of wedges, such as are not to be found elsewhere on the face of the earth, except in the chambers of this palace, nor at present can they be understood by any mortal. We do not know what the language is, or whether the writing is alphabetic, like that of Europe, or expresses syllabic sounds like that of the Japanese, or whole ideas like the Chinese. I conjecture that the last is the case, and that the wedges, according to their different position and arrangement, denote different things; and therefore that it is immaterial for the reader to know what was the idiom of the writer. The fact that there are sometimes very few wedges in one character, while the strokes in the Chinese characters are far more numerous, does not alter my opinion. For here there is no need of so many wedges as there is of strokes in the Chinese; for the Chinese strokes are without head or tail, or, if they have them

for the sake of calligraphy, may drop them without alteration of the sense, and therefore in one position can only have one meaning; whereas our wedges in the same position, if they are inverted, may have two meanings, and therefore may serve their purpose in less profusion and with less complication of forms." *

After Kaempfer, Christoph Gottlieb von Murr (1777), who had received accurate copies of the inscriptions at Persepolis from the hand of Niebuhr himself, was led astray by the supposed analogy of the Chinese characters, and wasted much time in studying this point, as he himself tells us:—

"Have the characters any analogy with the Chinese? If I wished to make a show of my ingenuity, I could talk to you much about this analogy. But I already regret the long hours that I have wasted in comparing the combinations of strokes in these characters with the Chinese, which also consist of strokes and crooked lines, simply that I might not seem to have neglected any chance of interpretation. I also compared them, with respect to their combinations, with the oldest script of the Chang dynasty (1,000 years before Christ), and with the ancient characters called *Ku wen* and *Tschoang tsee*." †

The same fancied resemblance between the Chinese and Persepolitan scripts attracted Raspe, who published a "Catalogue of Ancient Gems" in 1791. Raspe was not an Oriental scholar, and seems to have derived his knowledge of Chinese from a brief intercourse with Dr. Morton, the Librarian of the British Museum; but he nevertheless asserts that the cuneiform inscriptions on certain cylindrical seals "perfectly resemble" the Chinese character. This is the more remarkable because

* "Amoenitates Exoticae," p. 331.

† "Journal zur Kunstgeschichte," etc., p. 137.

Raspe ridicules at the same time those who tried to explain the hieroglyphics of Egypt by the Chinese characters, although this latter theory is scarcely less fanciful than his own.

Other incipient, but equally unsuccessful, attempts to explain the cuneiform character were made by those who were struck by the apparent resemblance of the Runic script or of the Ogham writing of Ireland. Of the former, Court de Gebelin is the chief, but Andrew Celsius, the Upsala professor, and the Baron de Bock adopted the same hypothesis; none of them, however, brought this view to any result. The hopes thus expressed by Bock were never realised:—

“The language of the Persepolitan inscriptions is not entirely lost; on the contrary, the new discoveries of M. Court de Gebelin ought to make us hope that the interpretation of it will soon be discovered.” *

In 1752 the Count de Caylus published an inscription which proved afterwards of some importance in the history of the decipherment; it was engraved on an alabaster vase, brought from Egypt, and placed in the Cabinet of Antiquities attached to the Royal Library, where it may still be seen. The vase exhibits some hieroglyphic characters in a cartouche, together with three lines of writing similar to that found at Persepolis. Caylus concludes from these facts that the Persepolitan script was of Egyptian origin; but, of course, he was totally unable to interpret a single word.

By the end of the eighteenth century there was

* “*Essai sur l'Histoire du Sabéisme*,” 1788, p. 62.

considerable material for the decipherers to work upon ; Kaempfer, Chardin, and De Bruin had published inscriptions varying in length and accuracy ; and, lastly, Niebuhr had given copies to the world that obviously far excelled all former efforts in completeness and correctness. Niebuhr's conscientious and enthusiastic efforts to obtain true representations of the buildings and inscriptions of Persepolis are thus described by his son :—

“These ruins, inscriptions, and bas-reliefs had been sufficiently well represented by three former travellers to arouse the attention of Niebuhr as the most important monument of the East. The number of inscriptions and sculptures made him hope that an interpreter might be found who, by comparing them, would be able to understand them, if once correct copies of them were placed before him ; and Niebuhr's keen eye told him how insufficient the drawings hitherto published were. Nothing out of all that he saw in Asia attracted him so powerfully in anticipation ; he could not rest until he had reached Persepolis, and the last night saw him sleepless. The remembrance of these ruins remained ineffaceable all his life long ; they were for him the gem of all that he had viewed.

“Three weeks and a half he remained beneath them, in the midst of a wilderness ; and during this time he worked without interruption at the measurement and drawing of the ruins. The inscriptions are placed high up on the walls, and were clearly to be distinguished only when the sun shone upon them ; as in this atmosphere the hard, originally polished marble is not weather-worn, his eyes, already affected by the uninterrupted work, were dangerously inflamed ; and this, as well as the death of his Armenian servant, obliged him, much against his will, to leave the old Persian sanctuary before he had completed his drawings.”

It was Niebuhr's copies, then, that were studied by the three men who, at the end of the last century and beginning of the present, undertook serious work

upon the decipherment of the Persepolitan inscriptions. Let us see how the way had been prepared for them.

The ancient language in which the sacred books of Persia were written had recently been interpreted. The history of this event forms one of the romantic pages in the dull annals of Oriental philology. The hero of the story is Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, a Parisian, born in 1731, and destined by his parents for the priesthood. . After passing through two seminaries, however, the young man found that his taste for theology was so much weaker than his passion for Eastern languages, that he gave himself up entirely to the latter ; and his assiduity at the Royal Library of Paris attracted the notice of the Abbé Sallier, keeper of the manuscripts, who succeeded in procuring for him a small salary in the capacity of student of Arabic and Persian. Soon after this, some odd leaves of a Zend manuscript fell into his hands, and the desire to find the key to the interpretation of the sacred language of the Parsees became so strong within him, that he determined, by some means or other, to make his way to India, and to study under the native priests. At this time the difficulties between the French and English in India were beginning, and a military expedition was about to start from Havre ; accordingly, the young Anquetil enlisted as a private soldier, and set out with his knapsack on his back. His patrons, however, heard of this, and hastened to the minister, who, affected by the zeal for knowledge of which the young man had given such unquestionable proof,

granted him a free passage, with a seat at the captain's table, and appointed a salary to be paid him upon his arrival in India. The ship reached Pondicherry after a passage of nine months, and Anquetil set out to Chandernagore with the intention of studying Sanscrit. Here he fell ill, and immediately after his recovery the place was besieged and taken by the English. This occurrence obliged Anquetil to return to Pondicherry, and he made the journey on foot, without money or baggage, across a most dangerous country. On arriving at Pondicherry, after an eventful march of a hundred days, the undaunted student embarked for Surat. There he succeeded in overcoming the fanaticism and scruples of some Parsee priests, and acquired from them a sufficient knowledge of Zend to translate a great part of the Zend-Avesta, their holy scriptures. In 1762 Anquetil was back in Paris, where he obtained a small post at the Royal Library, and employed himself in publishing the text and translation of the Zend-Avesta, hitherto entirely unknown in Europe; these appeared in 1771. Later, he gave up his post, and his subsequent life may be best described in his own words, prefixed to his edition of the "Upanishads":

"Anquetil-Duperron to the sages of India salutation! You will not disdain, O sages, the writings of a man who is, so to speak, of your own caste. Hear, I pray you, what is my manner of life. My daily food is composed of a little milk or cheese and water from the well, the whole costing about four French sous, or the twelfth part of an Indian rupee; I pass the winter without a fire; the use of a mattress or of sheets is unknown to me; my linen is never changed or washed; without income, without salary, without position, I live

upon my literary work, and am well enough for my age, in spite of my former labours ; I have neither wife, nor children, nor servant ; destitute of all the good things of this world, and free from all its ties, yet I am conscious of a love for all men, and especially good men. In this condition, waging war against my senses, I despise the seductions of the world, and I overcome them ; I am near the term of my existence ; I aspire keenly and constantly towards the Supreme and Perfect Being ; and I await with calmness the dissolution of my mortal frame."

This was the single-minded, if somewhat slovenly, scholar who first made known to the European world the sacred books of the Parsees ; and it was seen at once that the Zend language in which these were written, perhaps in the time of the successors of Cyrus, might, as the oldest Persian language known, be that in which the inscriptions of Persepolis were drawn up. Tychsel, a member of the University of Rostock, adopted this view in the first serious essay towards the decipherment of the unknown characters that had yet appeared : namely, his " Lucubration on the Cuneiform Inscriptions of Persepolis," published in 1798. This essay was, however, a failure. In the first place, the author was led astray by the notion, put forth by certain travellers and scholars, that the ruins of Chehel-minar could not be the palace of the Achæmenian sovereigns, because this was burnt down by Alexander ; while the existing remains show no trace of fire. Tychsel forgot or was ignorant that great portions of the palaces, especially the immense Hall, or *Apadana*, of the Hundred Columns, have almost entirely disappeared, and may well have been burned

down, that the cedar roofing has vanished in all the buildings, and that Plutarch expressly states that the original historians of Alexander agree that the latter caused the fire to be quickly extinguished before it had spread to all the structures. Tychsen also remarks that the palace of Persepolis was built by Egyptian workmen whom Cambyses had brought from Egypt, while the existing remains are not of Egyptian architecture. Here he would be contradicted by modern archæologists, who consider that there is a considerable trace of Egyptian influence, especially in the forms of the columns. Misled by these and other considerations, Tychsen declares that the ruins of Chehel-minar cannot be older than the Parthian dynasty (B.C. 246—A.D. 227); accordingly he actually interprets two short inscriptions in his own way with the help of the Zend, as referring to the founder of this dynasty, Arsaces. This is what he makes out of four lines written above the figure of a king:—

“This is the king, this is Arsaces the great, this is Arsaces, this is Arsaces, the perfect and the king, this is Arsaces the divine, the pious, the admirable hero.”

This happens to be the very inscription in which Grotefend afterwards correctly discovered the names of Xerxes and Darius. As for the means by which Tychsen found out, as he thought, the value of the cuneiform letters, he does not take us fully into his confidence on this point, but he observes that some of the letters resemble the Greek in form. Tychsen's interpretation in any case was an entire failure; not

a single scholar accepted it as a solution of the problem. A more scholarly but less ambitious "Essay upon the Cuneiform Inscriptions at Persepolis" was published by Dr. Frederick Münter, of Copenhagen, in 1800. Münter at once rejects all Tychsen's suggestions, and contents himself with preparing the way for subsequent decipherment. He says much about the date of the ruins and inscriptions, which he refers, after a full discussion, to the time of the Achæmenids. One point alone, he says, would be enough to refute Tychsen's view that the Parthians were the founders of Chehel-minar, and that is the appearance of Ethiopians among the tribute-bearers on the sculptured staircase; not a foot of land was ever possessed in Africa by the rulers of Persia except between the reigns of Cambyses and Darius Codomannus. As to the actual decipherment, Münter accepts Della Valle's opinion, that the lines are to be read from left to right, because characters found in one place at the right end of a line occur elsewhere in a similar inscription at the left end of the next line; and he adopts Niebuhr's discovery that the inscriptions of Persepolis are drawn up in three different forms of character and, without doubt, in three different languages. The kind of inscription which always appears first is much simpler than the others, and the words are divided from one another by an oblique stroke. Münter was the first who announced this last discovery. This simple kind of inscription is evidently composed of alphabetic characters, to judge from the small number of them which

are found: namely, no more than forty-eight; from the number which go to make up one word; and from the frequency with which they occur, even in the same word. The two other kinds of inscription are probably written in syllabic characters, or characters expressing a complete idea, like the Chinese. The first and simplest kind of inscription is, without doubt, written in the native Persian language. There are many cases in antiquity of inscriptions in two or more languages, set up by the Achæmenian monarchs and others. Münter tried to ascertain the value of a few of the alphabetic characters, especially the vowels, which he rightly considers must be those that occur most frequently, but his efforts remained without result.

Besides the cuneiform inscriptions, there were others in Persia which had recently been attracting the attention of scholars. These were written in the Pehlvi character, and accompanied sculptures of the Sassanian period (A.D. 227-641); the principal examples were found at the tombs of Naksh-i-Rustam. In the last years of the eighteenth century the great Arabist, Silvestre de Sacy, succeeded in deciphering the Sassanian inscriptions; they contained the name and titles of the monarch whose effigy was carved beneath, and generally ran in this fashion:—

“N., the great king, the king of kings, the king of Iran and Aniran, son of N., the great king, etc.”

This was a discovery which contained suggestions for those who were occupying themselves with the attempt to interpret the more ancient characters.

The year 1802 marks an epoch in the decipherment of the cuneiform characters. On September 18th of that year the *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* announced that George Frederick Grotefend—then studying at the University of Gottingen—

“had been led by certain historical pre-suppositions, and also by the analogy of the Sassanian inscriptions, to discover in the shorter cuneiform inscriptions of Persepolis, written in the first and simplest of the three forms of character, which he had examined with this purpose in view, the names and titles of Darius and Xerxes.”

Oddly enough, however, the essay in which Grotefend explained the method by which he had made this startling discovery was never published; it was only in the writings of other authors that he described the steps by which he had been led to so important a result. In the next year Silvestre de Sacy, the decipherer of the Sassanian inscriptions, gave a full account of Grotefend's work in a letter published in the *Magasin Encyclopédique*; and in 1805 an account in Grotefend's own words was given to the world at the end of the first volume of his friend Heeren's *Ideas on the Politics and Trade of the Foremost Nations of the Ancient World*. As this was the first step towards a complete interpretation of the Persian inscriptions in the cuneiform character, we give a short account of it.

Grotefend was the son of a shoemaker of Münden-on-the-Weser, and had entered the University of Göttingen in 1795, for the purpose of studying theology and philology. He soon showed an aptitude for dealing with obscure portions of science, and the most

difficult problems were precisely those which allured him. In 1802, his friend Fiorillo, the librarian, suggested that Grotefend should make an effort to decipher the cuneiform inscriptions of Persepolis, then the object of so much interest, and provided him with all the books bearing on the subject. The attempt was the more daring because Grotefend's studies had not lain in the direction of Oriental philology; on the contrary, the future professor of classical literature was not acquainted with a single Eastern language; but this did not hinder him from setting bravely to work. He chose for his first attempt two short trilingual inscriptions, published by Niebuhr, and naturally selected the first and simplest of the three versions in each case, believing, with Münter, that it was written in alphabetic characters, that the words were divided by oblique strokes, and that it was composed in the Persian language. The two inscriptions are found over the heads of sculptured figures of kings; therefore Tychoen had concluded that they contained the names and titles of the monarchs here represented. A certain word occurred several times in both, and Münter had conjectured that this meant "king." Other words were placed near to one another in both inscriptions, but in different relative positions; therefore Grotefend, remembering the formulæ on the Sassanian monuments, came very rapidly to the conclusion that the inscriptions ran in this form, the names varying in each case:—

"N., the great (?) king, the king of kings, the son of N. [the king]. . . ."

Then came the question : Who could the kings be, and what names were to be supplied here? Heeren's history and Münter's essay convinced Grotefend that the palaces and inscriptions of Persepolis were of the time of the Achæmenian dynasty ; the choice of names was, therefore, not very great. Cyrus and Cambyses were rejected because the names of the father and son in the inscription did not begin with the same letter, and, moreover, the first of these two names would be too short. Artaxerxes was too long a word. Darius and Xerxes alone remained ; and these appeared to fit so well into the characters that little doubt could remain of the correctness of the inference. Besides, in one of the inscriptions, the title of king did not appear after the name of the father, and this at once coincided with the statement of the Greek historians that Hystaspes, the father of Darius, was not himself king.

For the actual Persian names Grotefend had before him the Greek Dareios—which Strabo asserts to be an altered form—and the Hebrew Daryavesh ; the Greek Xerxes, corresponding to the Hebrew Akhashverosh, which is given by the Septuagint as Assoueros,* by the Vulgate as Assuerus, and by our Authorised Version as Ahasuerus ; and for Hystaspes he had the modern Persian form, Gushtasp. Accordingly, being careful to give the same value to the same letter in all cases, he read the names :—

* *I.e.*, in Ezra and Daniel. In Esther the LXX. have Artaxerxes.

Kh-sh-h-e-r-sh-e = Xerxes, or Akhashverosh.

D-a-r-h-e-u-sh = Dareios or Daryavesh.

G-o-sh-t-a-s-p = Hystaspes.

and translated the inscriptions :—

“Xerxes the mighty king, king of kings, son of Darius, the king. . . .”

“Darius the mighty king, king of kings . . . son of Hystaspes. . . .” *

It will be seen that there are several letters common to the three names, or to two of them, which were sufficient to prove the exactness of the whole. Twelve letters had, in fact, been now identified out of the forty-eight in the Persian alphabet. Many of Grotefend's results were afterwards repudiated, but these twelve letters have remained as a permanent acquisition of science since his time, and have proved to be a sufficient basis for further researches by competent scholars.

It must not be supposed that Grotefend's discovery met with no opposition. It was warmly received by many scholars, such as De Sacy and the aged Anquetil-Duperron himself; Sir William Ouseley and Sir Robert Ker Porter both expressed their admiration of the sagacity which led to so satisfactory a result, and their hopes that this was only the beginning of a complete interpretation; but Volney denounced the decipherment as resting on forms of names which were probably incorrect; and in Germany many voices were raised against a discovery which was said to have been made by blind chance.

Moreover, although Grotefend had done much, he

* See above, pp. 57 and 58.

had only made a beginning ; but he fancied he could do more than this. He tried to decipher the whole of the two inscriptions, and fell into many errors. He imagined that all the vowels would be expressed in the Persian cuneiform writing ; yet this is not so ; for, as in the Indian alphabets, the short *a* is not written, but is inherent in every consonant, unless another vowel is supplied ; this mistake, of course, prevented all progress. He attempted to discover the old Persian words from the inaccurate Zend vocabularies of Anquetil-Duperron, and made a complete fiasco in every case. The real result of these labours was that the way was pointed out for other scholars to follow ; the date of the inscriptions and of the palaces of Persepolis were put beyond a doubt ; the Persian history, as given us by Herodotus, had received a certain confirmation ; the native forms of the names Darius and Xerxes were shown to correspond closely with those preserved in the Biblical books, and the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther was now finally identified.

In 1822 Grotefend's decipherment received an unexpected support. The Cabinet of Antiquities at the Royal Library of Paris contained an alabaster vase, procured in Egypt, with an inscription in hieroglyphics and in the three kinds of cuneiform character found at Persepolis ; it will be remembered that this vase was published by the Count de Caylus in 1752. At the period of which we are now speaking, which indeed seems to be the age of decipherments, Champollion was engaged in studying and interpreting the

hieroglyphics of Egypt, and had made much progress in this new branch of science. It occurred to him to suggest to the Abbé Saint-Martin, a well-known Orientalist, who was occupying himself with the criticism of Grotefend's work, that they should study this vase together, and the result of this joint examination was that the inscriptions proved to contain the name of King Xerxes in the two forms of writing in use at his time in Egypt and in Persia.

Persian Cuneiform : Kh-sh-e-a-r-sh-a.

Egyptian Hieroglyphics : Kh-sh-e-a-r-sh-a.

The hieroglyphics thus bore a useful testimony to the correctness of the interpretation of the cuneiform character. It was the same Abbé Saint-Martin who suggested that the name of the father of Darius should be read as Vishtasp, according to the oldest Zend form, instead of Goshtasp, the form which Grotefend had adopted.

In 1826 a Danish scholar, Rask, who travelled to India to pursue his studies in Zend, and to collect Zend MSS., incidentally remarked, through his knowledge of Zend grammar, that two letters which occurred in the termination of the genitive plural, "king of kings," should be *n* and *m*, instead of *ch* and *o*, as read by Grotefend. This discovery was at once confirmed by the fact that it enabled another word applied in these same inscriptions as an epithet to Darius and Xerxes to be read as "Achæmenid."

In 1836 two treatises, by Lassen of Bonn and

Burnouf of Paris, corrected many of the remaining mistakes of Grotefend, and nearly completed the decipherment of the old Persian alphabet. These two writers were profound students of Zend, especially the latter, who had been enabled to make great advances on the road opened by Anquetil-Duperron, and whose *Commentary on the Yasna* marked a new stage in the progress of Zend studies. Lassen, accepting much of Grotefend's work, took as the starting-point of his new decipherments an inscription on the terrace of Persepolis, published by Niebuhr, which, as he inferred from the letters which he already knew, contained a number of geographical names, the appellations of the peoples who, as represented on the sculptured staircase, came to pay tribute to the King of Persia: such a list, in fact, as Darius had inscribed on the pillars by the Bosphorus; and by comparing with these names the lists of nations subject to the Persians given us by Herodotus and Strabo, he found out almost all the letters not yet correctly discovered by Grotefend. The inscription which Lassen selected is now finally translated as follows:—

“I am Darius the great king, king of kings, king of these many regions, son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenid.

“Thus says Darius the king: ‘By the grace of Ahuramazda these are the lands that I rule with my Persian host, that feared me and brought me tribute: the inhabitants of Susiana, the Medes, the Babylonians, the Arabs, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Cappadocians, the *Sparda*, the Greeks of the mainland and of the islands; and these lands in the East, the Sagartians, the Parthians, the *Zaraka*, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, the Sattagydes, Arachosia, India, *Gandara*, the *Saka*, and the *Maka*.’”

It will easily be understood how by taking the twelve letters discovered by Grotefend, and trying to make out with their help the names of the nations mentioned by Herodotus and Strabo, Lassen, with his knowledge of the forms of Sanscrit and Zend, was able to discover many new letters of the old Persian alphabet.

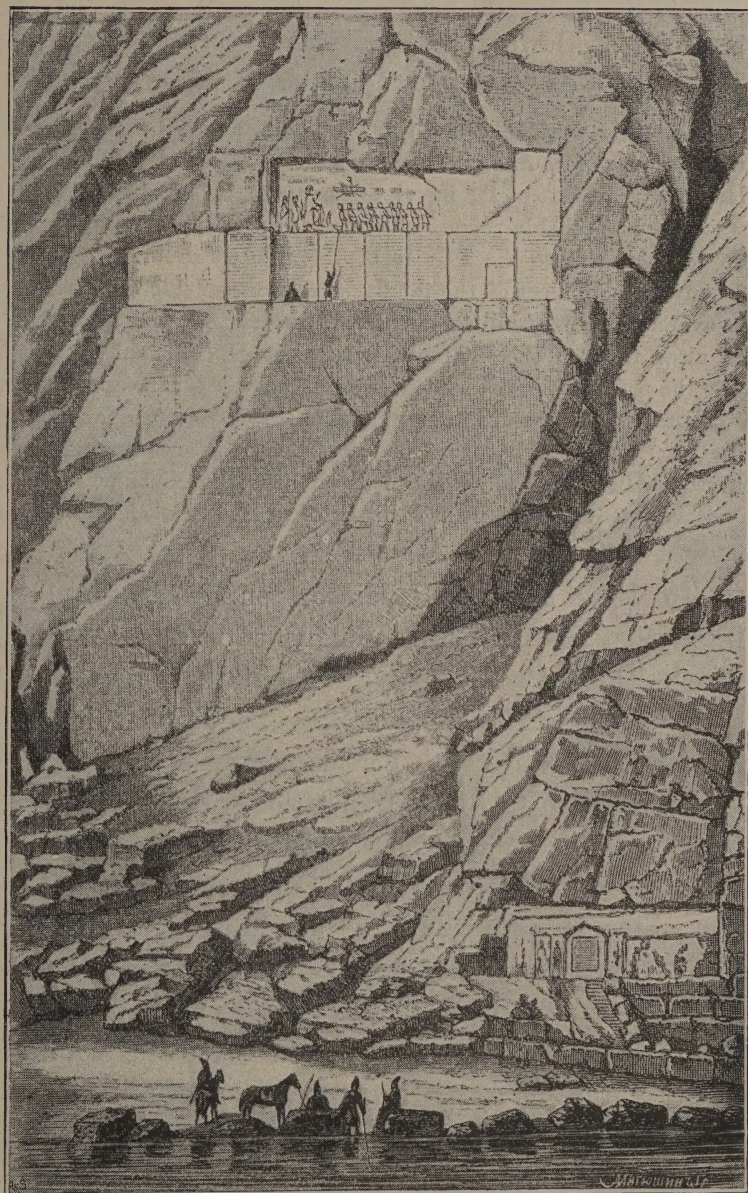
Burnouf worked upon two inscriptions of a different sort, lately copied on Mount Elvend, near Hamadan, the ancient Ecbatana, in Media, by the unfortunate Dr. Schulz, who was murdered on his way home. It had been supposed by the natives that if any man could find the key to the interpretation of these mysterious characters on the rock, the mountain would be shaken from the top to the bottom, and an immense treasure would be disclosed; but it does not appear that all this took place when Burnouf published his version, which simply contains the name and titles of Darius and Xerxes, with the ascription of praise to Ahuramazda, such as we have seen on the walls of Persepolis. In a work like the present it would be of no use to examine every step which these decipherers made, and the methods, often intelligible only to philologists, by which they formed their inferences. Burnouf's own description of the general character of his method is as follows:—

“There is only one scientific method for the determination of an unknown character: all the words in which it occurs must be collected and compared, and the values of the alphabet not yet represented by known characters [*i.e.*, through Grotefend's work] must be applied to it one after the other, until meanings which suit all the cases are obtained.”

One great result of the labours of Lassen and Burnouf was the discovery that the old Persian language of the time of Darius and Xerxes was by no means identical with the Zend, as earlier decipherers had supposed, but stood in the relation of a sister dialect to the sacred language of the Parsees. The work of the two great scholars was soon subjected to fruitful criticism by various Orientalists; Beer corrected three false values given to letters of the old Persian alphabet; Jacquet discovered two mistakes of the same sort; much was done towards the interpretation of the language and the explanation of the grammatical forms by Holtzmann and Benfey. Since Niebuhr new material has been given to decipherers in the fresh inscriptions copied by Ker Porter, Rich, Schulz, Westergaard, and Loftus.

But the most important work was done by our own countryman. Sir Henry Rawlinson had begun the study of the cuneiform inscriptions in 1835, while living in the East, and he appears to have worked at first quite independently upon them; he had heard rumours of Grotefend's discoveries, but no details; and in his examination of the tablets of Elvend, near Hamadan, found the names of Hystaspes, Darius, and Xerxes, without any assistance from the labours of the Hanoverian professor.* In 1837 he copied for the first time the great inscription on the rock of Behistun, described by Otter and Ker Porter. Meanwhile, he had an opportunity of comparing the work of other

* *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. X., p. 4.



THE BEHISTUN ROCK.

European scholars with his own, by studying the memoirs of Burnouf and Lassen. In 1838 he received Burnouf's *Commentary on the Yasna*, of which he says :—

“To this work I owe in a great measure the success of my translations ; for, although I conjecture the Zend to be a later language than that of the inscriptions, upon the *débris* of which it was indeed probably refined and systematized, yet I believe it to approach nearer to the Persian of the ante-Alexandrian ages than to any other dialect of the family, except the Vedic Sanskrit, that is available to modern research. At the same time, also, that I acquired through the luminous critique of M. Burnouf an insight into the peculiarities of Zend expression, and by this means obtained a general knowledge of the grammatical structure of the language of the inscriptions, I had the good fortune to procure copies of the Persepolitan tablets which had been published by Niebuhr, Le Brun, and Porter, and which had hitherto formed the chief basis of continental study.” *

In 1847 Sir H. Rawlinson published the great inscription of Behistun, nearly two hundred lines, which had for so many years been the object of his studies, and thus supplied large additional material for students of the old Persian language ; the edition was accompanied by a translation. Since that time little more has been done. M. Oppert explained a few characters that were still unknown, and he and Herr Spiegel have added to the accuracy of the interpretations, and to the explanation of the grammatical forms. The inscriptions of the Achæmenian kings of Persia in the palaces of Persepolis, on the tomb of Naksh-i-Rustam, on the rock of Elvend, on the palace of Susa, and on the monument of Suez, have all been deciphered and translated.

* *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. X., p. 8, 1847.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DECIPHERMENT OF THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

It was Niebuhr, as we have seen, whose accurate eye first detected the three different systems of cuneiform writing of which the inscriptions at Persepolis consist, and which we now know to be the Persian, Susian, and Babylonian versions of the same text, which Darius and Xerxes thus made known to the principal "nations and languages" of their empire. It was long, however, before it was discovered that the third of these systems was that of the Babylonians. Pietro della Valle had brought home to Italy bricks from the ruins of Babylon at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but the characters stamped upon these bricks do not seem to have occupied his attention, nor that of Kircher, who received one of these bricks for his museum in Rome. Kaempfer published one of the Babylonian inscriptions at Persepolis in 1712, but so carelessly that no profit was derived from it. The first traveller who remarked the inscriptions on the bricks of Babylon was the Father Emmanuel de Saint Albert, already mentioned in Chapter I., whose report provided

D'Anville with the material for his memoir on the position of Babylon in 1755. Then came Niebuhr, who observed many inscribed clay tablets and bricks among the ruins near Hillah, but did not identify the writing on them with the third system employed at Persepolis. The Abbé Beauchamp (1785) particularly noticed the inscriptions on the bricks of Babylon, and sent some specimens of the bricks to Paris, where they were stored in the National Library, the keeper of which, Millin, published some of the inscriptions, and had plaster casts of them taken and sent to various scholars of Europe.

The East India Company, always an enlightened body, had been aroused by the reports of the recent identification of the ruins of Babylon, and of the inscriptions in unknown characters which had been found among them. Consequently, in a public letter to Bombay, dated October 18th, 1797, they declare that

“Being always desirous to lend their assistance to those who may be employed in the elucidation of Oriental antiquities, and being informed that near the town of Hillah, on the River Euphrates, there exist the remains of a very large and magnificent city, supposed to be Babylon; and that the bricks of which those ruins are composed, are remarkable for containing on an indented scroll or label, apparently a distich, in characters totally different from any now made use of in the East;”

they have decided to direct the Governor of Bombay

“to give orders to their resident at Bassorah to procure from thence ten or a dozen of the bricks, and to transmit them, carefully packed up, as early as possible to Bombay, that they might be thence forwarded to them in one of their ships sailing for England.”

Here we have the beginning of the taste for collecting Babylonian antiquities in England which has finally brought into existence the unequalled galleries of the Assyrian Department of the British Museum. Hager, in 1801, published the inscription upon these bricks; it contains the name and titles of Nebuchadnezzar :—

“I am Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, maintainer of the temples of Bit-Saggil and Bit-Zida; princely son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon.”

But, of course, the inscription was not read or translated till long after. It is found with slight variations on the thousands of bricks dug up among the ruins of Babylon, and employed to build modern houses at Hillah and elsewhere.

It was about this time that André Michaux, a botanist, visited Mesopotamia in pursuit of his studies, and found near the ruins of Ctesiphon a polished piece of grey limestone marble, carved with figures of monstrous animals, and engraved with characters similar to those which had been remarked on the Babylonian bricks, and in some ways resembling those of the now well-known inscriptions at Persepolis. On his return to France, Michaux presented this monument to the Cabinet des Antiques of the National Library, the keeper of which, the learned Millin, published a full account of it in 1802. The *Caillou Michaux*, as it was called, was henceforth, through its publication, one of the principal examples of the Babylonian writing in Europe; it formed one of the chief problems for Oriental philologists to solve. But

now, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were a certain number of cuneiform inscriptions in every museum of Europe, consisting of inscribed bricks and cylindrical seals of hæmatite or carnelian, with characters engraved upon them.

At the beginning of the present century Münter, Tychsen, and Grotefend were busying themselves with the attempt to decipher the inscriptions at Persepolis, as published by Niebuhr; and it occurred to Lichtenstein to study another monument in cuneiform characters apparently similar to those of Persia. He took the *Caillou Michaux* as the object of his studies. But Lichtenstein had no definite process to follow, such as that which led his colleagues to fruitful results; he seems to have thought that inspiration might take the place of scientific method. He was like Alastor in the Egyptian temples:—

“ Among the ruined temples there,
 Stupendous columns, and wild images
 Of more than man, where marble demons watch
 The zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
 Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
 He lingered, poring on memorials
 Of the world's youth; through the long burning day
 Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor when the moon
 Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
 Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
 And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
 Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
 The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.” *

Shelley does not tell us what were the results of Alastor's inspired decipherment of the hieroglyphics,

* Shelley, “Alastor,” 118-129.



THE "CAILLOU MICHAUX."

but they could not have been more erroneous than Lichtenstein's explanation of the *Caillou Michaux*. The latter conceives that the Babylonian characters inscribed on this and other monuments are a variety of the Arabic character, and that, therefore, none of these inscriptions are older than the seventh century of our era. The *Caillou Michaux*

“contains a discourse addressed by the priest of the temple of the god of death to the women, attired in mourning garments, who assembled on the day of commemoration of all souls at the tombs of their departed relations, in order to give themselves up to transports of grief ; he exhorts them in this discourse to moderate their sorrow, to await with confidence the consolations of the deity, to cultivate purity of conduct, and to occupy themselves with their household duties.”

This summary, followed by a full translation, was seriously offered by Lichtenstein as the true interpretation of a monument which has since proved to be a boundary stone, containing a legal conveyance of land, of the twelfth century before Christ. As Lichtenstein did not explain the process by which he arrived at his interpretation, it was impossible to refute him at the time ; but no scholar accepted his statements as if they had been proved.

Grotefend, who by his happy discovery of the names of Xerxes, Darius, and Hystaspes, had opened the way for the interpretation of the old Persian inscriptions, occupied himself also with the other two systems of cuneiform writing on the walls of Persepolis ; the chief result was that he was enabled to show that the third system was identical with that found among the ruins

of Babylon, and therefore contained a Babylonian translation of the Persian text. From a careful examination of Babylonian bricks and other inscriptions, Grotefend was also led to discover the frequently recurring names of Nebuchadnezzar and his father, Nabopolassar, because, as he detected, they showed the same beginning and end; he could not, however, pronounce either of these names. Sir Harford Jones, the East India Company's resident at Bagdad, acquired at the beginning of the century a large black stone, covered with a very complicated kind of cuneiform character. This was immediately published, and Grotefend showed that the inscription was identical with a cylinder in the third Persepolitan character brought from Babylon by Ker Porter, and that both contained the name of Nebuchadnezzar. This was a valuable help to decipherers, since this complicated kind has been frequently discovered since, and on account of its employment in the most ancient monuments has generally received the name of "archaic character," although Nebuchadnezzar and his successors also made frequent use of it. This was all that Grotefend did in the field of Babylonian research.

Among the inscribed monuments discovered in the ruins of Babylon since the time of Père Emmanuel, there had been many small cylindrical objects of carnelian, hæmatite, and other precious stones, engraved with figures and characters like those of Persepolis. These were generally thought to be amulets, and were still worn as such by some of the

natives of Bagdad, who had been fortunate enough to discover some of them, in spite of the prohibition of the Koran. They were soon recognised in Europe as being the seals which Herodotus tells us were universally carried by the Babylonians, and the hole with which



CYLINDRICAL SEALS FROM BABYLONIA

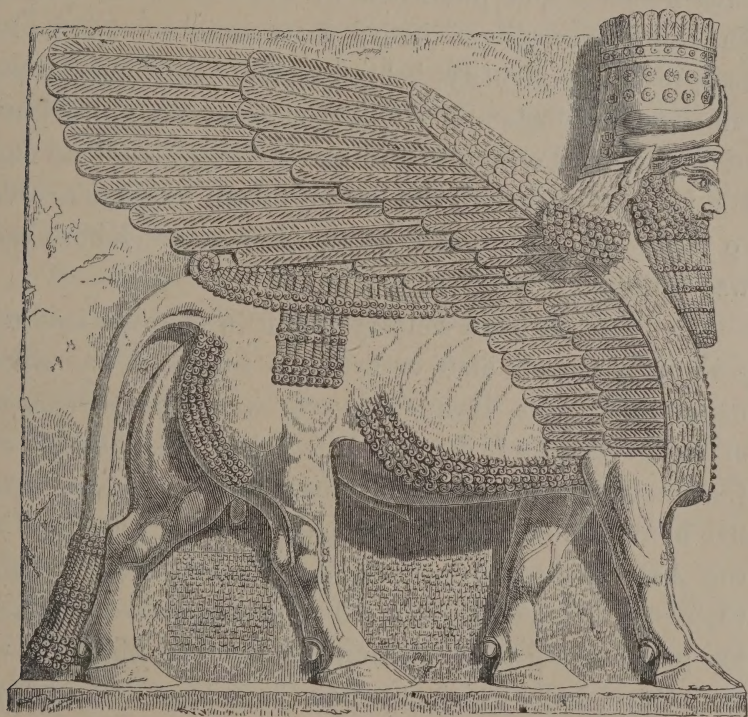
they are perforated was evidently to enable the wearer to pass a string through them. This inference has been confirmed by the fact that impressions of them are frequently found on the Babylonian legal and commercial documents: the clay contracts, which the witnesses and official scribes stamped with their seals, as equivalent to written signature. One such seal was found early in this century by the Baron de Fauvel on the field of Marathon: undoubtedly a memorial of one

of the soldiers of Darius who perished there. Many others were acquired in the course of the last century, and stored in public and private collections. Two such seals were published by Dorow at Wiesbaden in 1820, with a long discussion upon them by Grotefend, but no solid results were obtained from his explanations. In 1840, although the Persian inscriptions had all been read and explained, there had been no serious work on the Babylonian inscriptions, so much more complicated in their nature, and partly written, as Tychsen, Münter, and Grotefend inferred, in monograms. To the inscribed stones, bricks, and gems brought to Europe by the Abbé Beauchamp, Michaux, and the East India Company, had been added many clay cylinders and tablets and inscribed slabs, brought by Olivier, Ker Porter, and Rich. The last of these had found cuneiform inscriptions not only at Babylon, but among the ruins of Nineveh. These especially attracted the attention of the well-known Orientalist, Jules Mohl, who visited England about 1840, and was much interested in Rich's and Ker Porter's small collection of Assyrian antiquities at the British Museum. On his return to Paris, accordingly, Mohl strongly urged Botta, who was about to be sent out to Asiatic Turkey, in order to occupy the newly-founded post of French Consul at Mosul, to employ his spare time in making excavations on the neighbouring site of Nineveh. Botta went out in 1842, and immediately set to work to follow the advice of Mohl, announcing the results in a series of letters to his friend, some of which were

published, as they arrived, in the *Journal Asiatique* during the years 1843-1845.

Botta first attempted to make excavations among the mounds of Kouyunjik and Nebi Yunus, described by Rich, opposite Mosul; but he was hampered in every way by the authorities, and only acquired a few fragments of inscribed stone. By chance an inhabitant of Khorsabad, a small village four hours' journey to the north-west of Mosul, came upon the scene, and informed the French Consul that inscriptions were much more frequently found at the place where he lived. Botta caught at the hint, and started excavations on this new spot, with the result that he soon laid bare the foundations of an immense edifice, and found among them sculptures of a style hitherto unknown, and in large quantities; he had, in fact, brought to light the first Assyrian palace disclosed to the eyes of modern Europe: the residence of the powerful monarch, Sargon, whose name is mentioned by Isaiah, and who was the father of Sennacherib. This identification, however, was not yet discovered. The important point for our history is that a large number of inscriptions were found on the walls of the palace, on the winged bulls, and on the bas-reliefs, which supplied much fresh material for the decipherers to work upon, and gave a great impetus to the study of the cuneiform writing. The difficulties against which Botta had to struggle during his work of excavation were enough to have overcome a weaker man. A passage in the Arabian geographer Yakut announced

that a large treasure was concealed at Khorsabad, and the knowledge of this aroused the suspicions of the Turkish authorities, who put every obstacle in the way of the French researches. Botta was accused of at-



WINGED BULL FROM KHORSABAD.

tempting to erect a fort at Khorsabad; some of the monuments that he found were destroyed; news was sent to Constantinople, and the Government of the Sultan was asked to stop the excavations. But courage and perseverance won the day, and in 1847 a large collection of sculpture and more than two hundred

inscriptions from Khorsabad arrived safely at Paris. When the labour of excavation was done, Botta set to work to study the material he had found. Others had already examined the copies which he had sent from Mesopotamia and published in the *Journal Asiatique*. In 1845 Loewenstern issued a memoir in which he recognised the identity, behind certain variations, of the cuneiform characters of Khorsabad with the third kind of writing at Persepolis and the writing found among the ruins of Babylon, and he surmised, but was unable to prove, that the name of the builder of Khorsabad was Sargon.

In 1846 our own country began to take the leading part in Mesopotamian excavations that she has since maintained. Sir Henry Layard, with the assistance of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, then ambassador at Constantinople, began his famous researches at Nimroud, five hours below Mosul; two galleries of antiquities in the Assyrian department of the British Museum are the result of these labours. The distinguished explorer has given us a graphic account of the first discovery of the winged bulls which stood at the gate of the ancient palace of Ashur-nasir-pal. The natives, in immense excitement, all declared that Nimrod himself had been unearthed; and one of the Arabs, at the first moment of the discovery, started off at a rapid run to Mosul, to inform the Pacha of the event. The result, of course, was that it was declared impious to touch the figure of the patriarch; the excavations were stopped, and they could only be resumed on the receipt of a special permit

from the Sultan, obtained by the British ambassador himself. But Sir H. Layard's work is too well known to be again described here. It needs only to be added that between 1848 and 1853, not only Ashur-nasir-pal's palace at Nimroud, but also the palaces of Sennacherib and Ashur-bani-pal, or Sardanapalus, at Kouyunjik, had been laid bare by Sir H. Layard and Mr. Hormuzd Rassam; and that in a hall of the latter edifice the immense collection of clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform characters, known as the Library of Ashur-bani-pal, had been discovered.

Meanwhile, Botta's work upon his inscriptions had borne some fruits; he finally established the identity, with slight variations, of the Assyrian writing with that of Babylon and the third kind at Persepolis; he discovered the meaning of several characters occurring both at Khorsabad and in Persia, such as "king," "king of kings," "country," "my lands," interpreting them by means of the Persian version; but he could not pronounce a single letter, except the word signifying "I," which, from the occurrence of the characters in certain proper names, he read A-n-k, and identified with the Hebrew *anoki*.

In 1849 the Semitic scholar De Saulcy published the Babylonian version of the trilingual inscription of Elvend, with a commentary, in which the value of every character and the meaning of every word are discussed. This was the first attempt of the kind, and in many ways still retains its importance; only De Saulcy imagined that the Babylonian writing was

alphabetic: this obliges him to adopt the theory that many characters have the same value; two characters alone (*bu* and *mus*) suggest to him the idea that they represent syllables. A second memoir by De Saulcy determined the consonantal value of 120 Assyrian characters, although he still looked upon them as alphabetic, and did not understand that a vowel was inherent in them. This will show that the work of this scholar on the Babylonian inscriptions was of considerable importance.

It was Dr. Hincks, of Dublin, who discovered the leading principle of the Assyrian writing: namely, the expression of whole syllables by the characters, not simply of alphabetic values, whether those of vowels or consonants. Hincks read the results of his researches before the Irish Academy at various sessions during the years 1846-1849. Besides the syllabic characters, he finds many of the monogrammatic characters already noticed by Tychsen, Münter, and Grotefend, and these he calls abbreviated characters.

In 1851 Sir Henry Rawlinson published the Babylonian version of the great Behistun inscription, the Persian form of which, it will be remembered, he had given to the world in 1846. The chief help to the decipherment consisted in no less than eighty proper names, which were compared with the Persian forms. It will at once be obvious that this is sufficient material for the reading of a large number of Babylonian characters; only as these are not alphabetic, but are syllabic and monogrammatic, and amount in number to

more than six hundred, it will be seen that even here there is not an opportunity of finding out nearly all the values.

Sir H. Rawlinson's own account of his method may be given here:—

“The tablets of Behistun, of Naksh-i-Rustam, and Persepolis have furnished a list of more than eighty proper names, of which the true pronunciation is fixed by the Persian orthography, and of which we have Babylonian equivalents. Careful comparison of these duplicate forms of writing the same name, and a due appreciation of the phonetic distinctions peculiar to the two languages, have supplied means of determining, with more or less of certainty, the value of about a hundred Babylonian characters, and a very excellent basis has been thus determined for a complete arrangement of the alphabet. The next step has been to collate the inscriptions, and to ascertain or infer from variant orthographies of the same name (and particularly the same geographical name) the homophones of each known alphabetical power. In this stage of the enquiry much caution, or, if I may so call it, ‘critique,’ is necessary; for though two inscriptions are absolutely identical in sense, and even in expression, it does not follow that wherever one text may differ from the other we are justified in supposing that we have found alphabetical variants. Many sources of variety exist besides the employment of homophones. Ideographs or abbreviations may be substituted for words expressed phonetically; sometimes the allo-cution is altered; sometimes synonyms are made use of; grammatical suffixes and affixes, again, may be employed, or suppressed, or modified at option. By mere comparison, however, repeated in a multitude of instances, so as to reduce almost infinitely the chance of error, I have added nearly fifty characters to the hundred previously known through the Persian key.”*

At the same time Sir Henry Rawlinson had to announce the discovery of one of the strangest phenomena that exist in any language or any system of

* *Journal of Asiatic Society*, Vol. xii., p. 404 (1850).

writing, and that is the use in Babylonian and Assyrian of “allophones,” or characters that can be read in two or more different ways. An instance may, perhaps, be allowed: the Babylonian word for “Achæmenid” is written in the following different ways in the inscriptions of Persia; the syllables between the hyphens are each represented by one character—

A-kha-ma-an-ni-is-si’.

A-kha-ma-nis-si’.

A-kha-man-nis-si’.

Now, in the last mode of writing, the characters for *man* and *nis* happen to be identical in form; yet there can be no doubt that they are to be read as two entirely different sounds. The different ways of writing “Achæmenid” illustrate the variety of orthography in the Assyrian and Babylonian texts; the same words are found written in several manners.

Another quotation from Sir Henry Rawlinson will show how progress was made with the translation, as apart from the decipherment of the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions.

“The Babylonian translations of Persian inscriptions have furnished a list of about two hundred Babylonian words, of which we know the sound approximately and the meaning certainly. These words are almost all found either entire or modified in the Assyrian inscriptions, and we can usually arrive at a fairly correct notion of the phrase in which they occur.

“The difficult, and at the same time the essential, part of the study of Assyrian consists in discovering the unknown from the known, in laying bare the anatomy of the Assyrian sentences, and, guided by grammatical indications, by a few Babylonian landmarks,

and especially by the context, in tracing out, sometimes through Semitic analogies, but more frequently through an extensive comparison of similar or cognate phrases, the meaning of words which are otherwise strange to us. . . . Thus, I have added about two hundred meanings certainly, and a hundred more probably, to the vocabulary already obtained through Babylonian translations. I estimate the number of words in the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions at about five thousand, and I do not pretend to be acquainted with more than a tenth part of that number; but it must be remembered that these words constitute all the most important terms in the language, and are in fact sufficient for the interpretation of the historical inscriptions and for the general recognition of the object of every record, be it an invocation or a dedication, or, as it more frequently happens, be it intended as a mere commemorative legend.”*

In this same year, 1850, before Sir H. Rawlinson had actually published any of his Assyrian translations, De Sauley published a translation of ninety lines found at Khorsabad; this was the first explanation of anything beyond the trilingual inscriptions of Persia. Sir H. Rawlinson immediately published the same text, with an interpretation slightly different. One of the principles of the Assyrian writing was illustrated by the discovery in the Behistun inscription that the name of Nebuchadnezzar, clearly recognised in the Persian text, was written in Babylonian with characters that could only be read *An-pa-sa-du-sis*. It was soon seen that besides the simple ideograms of one character, or monograms, which had early been detected here and there in the Babylonian inscriptions, there were also words written ideographically with two or more

* *Journal of Asiatic Society*, Vol xii., p. 409 (1850).

characters, and that the pronunciation of these could only be learnt from other sources, where the ideograms are represented by words spelt phonetically.

The year 1857 is memorable in the annals of Assyriology. In that year the Royal Asiatic Society of London proposed a test of the genuine character of the translations offered by scholars of the Assyrian inscriptions. It was as follows: eight hundred lines of cuneiform writing, recently found by Layard on clay cylinders at Kalah Sherkat, not far from the site of Nineveh, were to be independently translated by any scholars who would come forward and accept the proposal; the results of their work were to be sent sealed to the secretary of the Society, and the packets were to be opened on the same day before a commission, which should report on the points of resemblance or unlikeness to be found in the translations. This proposal was made public in March, and on May 25th four packets were opened, containing the work of Sir H. Rawlinson, Mr. Fox Talbot, Dr. Hincks, and Dr. Oppert. The general similarity of the results in the four essays formed a strong confirmation of the genuineness of the translations and the correctness of the method of decipherment, which even such a sceptic as M. Renan freely admitted.

As it was to be expected, however, the youthful science of Assyriology met with much opposition, especially from Semitic scholars. The fact that Assyrian and Babylonian belonged to the Semitic family of languages had early been surmised, and the

researches of De Sauley had put it beyond a doubt. The Italian scholar, Luzzatto, had indeed decided on *à priori* grounds that Assyrian must belong to the Indo-European family of languages; in 1849 he had published a pamphlet to show that the Assyrian proper names and titles in the Hebrew Scriptures and in Greek authors could only be explained with the help of Sanscrit and Persian; and a year later he issued a study on the inscriptions of Persepolis, Hamadan, Van, and Khorsabad, in which he remarked:—

“As for the language, all these Assyrian scripts which present apparent differences at Van, at Khorsabad, at Babylon, and in Persia, express one and the same language, which, indeed, may have undergone the changes worked by time on the most stable idioms; and this language belongs by its grammar and by its lexicon to the great family of the Indo-European tongues, at the head of which stands Sanscrit.” *

But De Sauley, Botta, Rawlinson, Hincks, and Oppert had, in the opinion of most scholars, overthrown this idea, and established the character of Assyrian as a Semitic dialect. Nevertheless, they had not laid all doubts to rest. The greatest Hebrew scholar, perhaps, of his day, Heinrich Ewald, wrote severely in 1858 on the work of Assyriologists, and on the improbability of the grammatical forms which they expected to be received as Semitic.†

In 1859 a review of M. Oppert's “*Expédition Scientifique en Mésopotamie*”—one of the most valu-

* “*Études sur les inscriptions Assyriennes de Persépolis, Hamadan, Van, et Khorsabad*” (1850), p. 207.

† “*Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*” (1858), p. 190 ff.

able works written on the decipherment of the Assyrian inscriptions—was published by M. Renan, who showed great reluctance to accept Assyrian as a Semitic language :—

“If we examine the Semitic language which results from the readings of Assyriologists, independently of the processes by which they are obtained, we experience much perplexity. The usages of general Semitic grammar are often violated. Peculiarities which are thrown into the background in Semitic grammar here appear in the foreground ; we are constantly meeting with forms which do not seem at home, and with words never found in the other Semitic languages. To understand the astonishment caused by this fact, we must recall the strongly-marked character of unity presented by the Semitic languages. There is no language in this family in which *in* is not translated by *bi*, *to* by *li*, *all* by *kol*. A Semitic language in which *in* is rendered by *ina*, *to* by *ana*, *all* by *gabbu*, as M. Oppert wishes, is a phenomenon almost as difficult for the philologist to admit as it would have been for Cuvier to admit a carnivorous animal with flat teeth or a mastodon with wings. The organisation of a language is as much a living whole as that of an animal, and the philologist is as fully authorised to declare certain grammatical forms unnatural as the anatomist is to reject the possibility of certain beings. . . . I am bound to say this: the Semitic language given us by M. Oppert offends, on many points, the sense which I believe that I have of the nature of a Semitic language. I should mistrust this judgment if it was isolated ; but it is also that of one of the men who best understand in Europe the comparative grammar of the Semitic tongues. I demur to the somewhat harsh form of M. Ewald’s observations. Researches of the kind which now occupies us, if they are conducted with a serious purpose, ought always to be received with gratitude, even when objections must necessarily be made to them. M. Ewald, whose merit as a specialist on the grammar of Hebrew and the kindred languages is disputed by no one, rejects the Assyrian grammar resulting from M. Oppert’s readings. His observations on the inflexions, especially that of the noun, are most just ; and in general, M. Ewald’s impressions in the presence of this so-called

Semitic language are exactly those that I have myself experienced." *

But, nevertheless, M. Renan was forced to admit that there were very clear marks of Semitism in Assyrian; and he, therefore, suggests that the language had adopted a large number of Semitic words and forms like Pehlvi, or even modern Turkish and Persian. Assyrian seemed to him to be only half Semitic.

In spite, however, of the opposition of these Semitic scholars, the Assyriologists have gone calmly on their way, collecting more and more material for the grammar and lexicon of the Assyrian language. Immense difficulties have stood in their way, owing to the inaccurate mode of writing of the Assyrians; the variety of orthography; the incompleteness of the syllabary, which does not express some of the most important letters, namely, the gutturals; and innumerable inaccuracies, which often make it impossible to understand the exact form of a word. The object of the Assyrians in writing seems, in fact, to have been simply to render the sound more or less roughly, and with many inconsistencies. The precise orthography of the other Semitic languages was unknown to them, as well as the accuracy of the later Semitic alphabets. Their characters, as has long been surmised, were probably borrowed from a non-Semitic people.

During the last thirty years constant progress has been made in the interpretation of the Assyrian and Babylonian texts. New material has been brought over

* *Journal des Savants* (April, 1859), p. 246.

from Mesopotamia from time to time, especially by Mr. George Smith and Mr. Hormuzd Rassam. Texts and translations, commentaries, papers treating of points of grammar or lexicography, have been published in numbers every year. Everything tends to clear up disputed points, and to complete the knowledge of the language. The Semitic character of Assyrian is no longer doubted by the most sceptical.

Perhaps this sketch of the decipherment may be concluded with a short account of some of the external aids to reading and interpretation, and some of the methods pursued by Assyriologists in general. Professor Schrader, in his book on the principles of the cuneiform writing, classifies the external aids as follows: the trilingual inscriptions of Persia, the parallel passages, the syllabaries, the sculptures, historical tradition, free combination. The help afforded by the inscriptions has been, it is hoped, sufficiently explained. The parallel passages are found, for instance, in the numerous parallel inscriptions with which the walls of the Assyrian palaces are covered, and which also exist on clay cylinders and tablets; they illustrate the complicated nature of the Assyrian writing and the variety of its orthography. For instance, there is one character, among others, which Sir H. Rawlinson was unable to read in the Behistun inscription; in one of the inscriptions found by Botta at Khorsabad it occurs in the name of a city; and in a parallel passage from the same place the name of this city is written without this particular character, but with two other already

known characters in its place: namely, *zi-ir*. This at once shows the value of the unknown character to be *zir*, and the word was easily identified with the Hebrew *zera'*, and translated *seed* or *family*. This is one instance of a process that had to be repeated hundreds of times before the characters of the Assyrian writing were understood.

The help given by the "syllabaries" was totally unexpected by the first decipherers. It was in 1849 that Sir Henry Layard discovered a number of clay tablets in the "library of Ashur-bani-pal," which proved, on examination, to be evidently intended by the Assyrians themselves as helps for those who were learning to read and write in ancient days. The syllabaries are chiefly of service for the explanation of the ideograms or monogrammatic characters, which frequently occur in the inscriptions, where there is sometimes no clue to their pronunciation. They afford the same help that was given, in the instance cited above, by the parallel passage. We find in the syllabaries such cases as the following: a character, often used as an ideogram, is written on one side of a line drawn down the middle; on the other side are some well-known phonetic characters which express the sound of the aforesaid ideogram; thus:

x		si-i-mu
(one character).		(three characters).

This teaches us that the hitherto unknown character *x* is to be pronounced *simu*.

The help rendered to the decipherer by the sculptures will be easily understood; although its value lies rather in suggestion and confirmation of results derived from other considerations, and it would be dangerous to depend upon it alone. The bas-relief on the rock of Behistun, which represents a king placing his foot on the neck of a prostrate individual, while nine others with ropes round their necks stand before him, illustrates in a most satisfactory manner the account read by Sir H. Rawlinson in the text of the conquest and chastisement of rebels by Darius. In the black obelisk from Nimroud we see trains of envoys bringing presents to the Assyrian king, and here we have a confirmation of the decipherment of the inscription as a list of monarchs who sent tribute to Shalmaneser II., including Jehu, the king of Israel. In the hunting-scenes, we see Ashur-bani-pal seizing a lion by the ear, and an accompanying inscription announces that the king "seized the animal by the ——" ; we can infer that the unknown character here signifies *ear*: an inference fully borne out by the further study of an ideogram, the pronunciation and meaning of which have now been fully established.

The assistance rendered by historical tradition is illustrated by the fact that it was the statement of Genesis, chap. x., that the Assyrians were a Semitic people, which induced the decipherers to expect a Semitic language behind the cuneiform characters of Nineveh; and this expectation was fully justified by the results. Again, in certain cylinders from Nineveh,

a king was mentioned as the subject of the narrative, whose name was written in ideograms, and could not be read; but in the same inscriptions a city, *Ur-sa-lim-mu*, and a Jewish king, *Ha-za-ki-ya-hu*, were alluded to, and these could hardly be other than the names of Jerusalem and Hezekiah; the Assyrian king, therefore, was identified with Sennacherib, and since then the ideograms composing his name have been fully explained from other sources, and are read *Sin-akhi-irba*. A land of Akharri* is frequently mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. The geographical position of this region would be entirely unknown to us were it not that the cities of Tyre (Surru) and Sidon (Ziduni) are alluded to as situated within it, and prove it to be Phœnicia.

* The Tell el Amarna tablets show us that this name is to be pronounced Amûri, and probably means "land of the Amorites," a designation roughly given to the whole of Syria.

Part II.

RECENT DISCOVERIES.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERIES AT TELLO.

UNTIL recently, the date at which the art of writing may have been introduced among the Semitic races was a much disputed question. Many held that no written monuments could have existed before Moses. There was certainly no proof that the art was practised in the time of the patriarchs; such a composition as the song of Lamech, with its proverb-like brevity, might well have been handed down by oral tradition; and there is no mention of writing in the Book of Genesis. The important question whether a written character was already in use among the Semitic peoples in the time of Joseph or Abraham, and whether Moses, supposing him to be the author of Genesis, could have made use of documents earlier than his own time, was one that found no answer. It was discovered, indeed, early in this century that the Egyptians had employed their hieroglyphics from a remote period; but these could never have been adopted by a Semitic people; and there was no reason to suppose that the Phœnicians had invented their alphabet until a date subsequent to Moses.

Heinrich Ewald, whose "History of Israel" was first published in 1843, the year which gave birth to

the new science of Assyriology through Botta's first discoveries at Khorsabad, thus expresses himself: *—

"The question stands briefly thus: Was there a system of writing already current in the time of Joseph or Abraham, or at least in the days of Moses? We are entirely without evidence to decide this question. . . .

"The narratives of the patriarchal ages bear no trace of a certain tradition of the use of writing in that ancient period. . . .

"It cannot be proved that any written documents came down from the patriarchal times to later ages."

Now, however, the question may receive a positive answer. Recent discoveries among the most ancient remains of Chaldæa have proved that the art of writing was practised at a period long anterior to the time of Abraham, in the very country from which the patriarch himself is said to have proceeded. It is now generally accepted that the city of Ur, on the west bank of the Euphrates, half-way between Babylon and the Persian Gulf, and represented by the ruins which the modern Arabs call Mukeyyer, was that Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham was born; and inscriptions on clay have been found there which must be ascribed to a date long before B.C. 2000. But the question whether Ur of the Chaldees was a city, or, as the Septuagint takes it, simply the territory of the Chaldæans, makes little difference here, since the cuneiform inscriptions agree with Strabo in showing that the Chaldæans inhabited the southern region of Mesopotamia in which Mukeyyer is situated. The inscriptions found at Ur itself have at present been few in number, and belong to a limited

* Ewald, "*Geschichte des Volkes Israel*" (1843), Vol. i., pp. 63 and 66.

period. If the great temple of the moon-god, founded in the very beginning of history, and maintained down to the latest times of the Babylonian monarchy, could be fully excavated, or if the city, round the walls of which lies a circle of tombs, could be ransacked for its hidden archæological treasures, the results would, no doubt, reward the hardest labour; but at present we must



MUKEYYER, IDENTIFIED BY SIR H. RAWLINSON WITH UR OF THE CHALDEES.

look for our chief source of information about the early civilization of Chaldæa, in the time of Abraham and before his date, to another site, that of a city which was at a certain period subject to the powerful kings of Ur, in the neighbourhood of which it lies. This site is that of the city of Lagash, represented by the mounds of Tello, fifteen hours north of Mukeyyer, and twelve hours east of Warka, the ancient Erech.*

* Genesis x. 10.

It was a belief of ancient writers that Abraham was a learned man, especially versed in the science of astronomy, which he imparted to the Egyptians during his visit to their country; and this opinion seems to have been partly based on a passage in the Babylonian history of Berosus, now unfortunately lost. Modern writers have considered that it was a false ascription to an uncultivated age of the high cultivation which distinguished the Babylonians in the days of Darius or Alexander. But in the face of the new discoveries, we must now admit that even in the time of Abraham the Chaldæans had reached a high degree of culture, and very probably had already obtained much of that knowledge of the stars which their constant observations on the plains of the Euphrates enabled them to acquire. We must remind ourselves that, according to the Babylonian tradition, the coast of the Persian Gulf was the cradle of civilization; it was there that the mythical Oannes appeared, and

“gave men the knowledge of letters and sciences, and arts of all kinds; and taught them to build cities, and to found temples, and to enact laws, and to measure the ground; and showed them how to sow seeds and gather in the fruits; and in general instructed them in all matters that tend to civilize human life.” *

Let us now see what the last ten years have brought to light of the most ancient civilization of Southern Babylonia, or Chaldæa, the country from which Abraham set forth on his journey to Canaan.

Until ten years ago hardly anything was known of

* Berosus in Eusebius, *Chron. Arm.*, p. 8, and Syncellus, p. 28, B.

the early history of Babylonia. The excavations at Khorsabad, Nimroud, Kouyunjik, and other places, had brought to light inscriptions which enabled us to re-construct the history of Assyria in the most authentic manner, from contemporary monuments belonging to a period of nearly a thousand years; and the sculptures, architectural remains, and objects of all sorts, gave us a very fair idea of the manners and customs of the ancient empire. But comparatively little had been found among the even more ancient remains of Babylonia or Chaldæa. The site of Eridu at Abu Shahrein, that of Larsa at Senkereh, that of Erech at Warka, and that of Ur at Mukeyyer, had been proved to contain architectural remains of the highest interest, and had yielded some inscriptions of the greatest value; but the imperfect excavations had brought to light no important works of sculpture, and had not been sufficiently methodical or complete to show how many treasures are really concealed beneath those mounds with which the plains of Chaldæa are strewn. At last, in 1878, Mr. Hormuzd Rassam discovered the remains of the Temple of the Sun at Abu Habba, the ancient Sippara, so famous for its school of astronomers and its library of clay tablets; here he found many valuable records, and above all a mass of legal deeds and commercial contracts on clay, belonging to the period from Nabopolassar to Darius Hystaspis (B.C. 620-485).

At about the same time that Mr. Rassam was exploring Abu-Habbah, the French vice-consul at

Bassorah, M. de Sarzec, began to undertake excavations at a series of mounds named Tello, situated fifteen hours north of Mukeyyer and twelve hours east of Warka: an hour and a half to the east of an ancient canal, called the Shatt el-Hai, which, running almost due north and south, joins the Tigris to the Euphrates. The region in which Tello lies had always been considered unapproachable; for it is in the midst of deserts and marshes, only inhabited by the Montefik Arabs, a tribe of warlike marauders, almost always in a state of rebellion against the Turkish authorities. M. de Sarzec, however, during his residence at Bassorah, had formed some alliances with members of this tribe, and so was enabled to venture for a time, although at considerable risk, into their domain. The whole district is covered with mounds; but the exceptional number of fragments of all sorts, potsherds, inscribed cones and bricks, and broken sculpture, which strewed the mounds of Tello, made the French consul decide to begin operations here. He was rewarded by finding that the principal elevation was formed of a building of baked bricks, standing on a platform of unburnt brick-work, covered and concealed by the sands of the desert, which for many centuries had been blown across it.

Further researches on the part of M. de Sarzec brought to light all sorts of remains, such as the frames of doorways, a series of brick cavities enclosing bronze statuettes and inscribed tablets, and two large clay cylinders covered with cuneiform characters. After

working during two winters, he made a journey home to Europe, and arrived in Paris with his first spoils in July, 1878. At the beginning of 1880 the vice-consul had returned to the East with a firman from the Sultan, granting full permission for further excavations; and accordingly he proceeded again to the scene of his former labours. During his absence in France, M. de Sarzec had been married, and his bride courageously insisted on sharing with him the risk and exposure involved in his work. They established their household in a tent at a small village on the banks of the Shatt el-Hai, and, in spite of constant alarms, were not seriously molested by the turbulent Arabs; and from his hearth in the midst of the desert M. de Sarzec journeyed every morning across the rough and marshy country to the mounds of Tello.

The physical features of the region of Lower Chaldæa, in which Tello is situated, are thoroughly characteristic. There are two ways of reaching the place from Bassorah, says M. de Sarzec: either by the Tigris and the Shatt el-Hai or by the Euphrates and the Shatt el-Hai. Those travelling by the second route find that at the village of Beni-Seds the Euphrates divides into several branches, each of which is sub-divided into little canals, by which the river spreads over the country and makes it a huge marsh, twelve or fifteen leagues broad from east to west, and ten or twelve from north to south.

“Among the network of canals which cross one another in the midst of the reed-beds and islets with which the marshes are covered,

we find two navigable channels, usually followed by the boats which ascend and descend the Euphrates.

“One of them, named by the people of the country the Old Euphrates, turns abruptly to the left, and, describing an immense curve towards the south, encloses the marshes, and separates them from the desert. Then ascending once more towards the north-east, the channel becomes broader and deeper, in proportion as it leaves the marshes and re-enters its bed. Two hours before arriving at Sook esh-shioukh the stream has become a river again; and the Euphrates, now nearly two hundred yards broad, flows slowly on between two rows of date-palms. This ancient bed of the river, choked up long ago by the mud of the marshes, in which it almost loses itself, is now only followed by light boats drawing very little water.

“The other branch is a narrow but deep channel, which crosses the marsh almost in a straight line from one end to the other. The boat glides along by a thousand turnings among the reeds, which here grow several yards high. From time to time the reed-beds separate sufficiently to allow you to perceive on the right, towards the north, and in the direction of Tello, a real inland sea, the uniform surface of which extends as far as you can see towards the horizon. Here and there, on the right and left of the channel, appear, among islets covered with date-palms, the huts of the Arab villages. It requires twelve hours to traverse these marshes.”

This description of the region of Lower Chaldæa, its marshes, its reed-beds, and its date-palms, shows us what the country has been like from the time of Abraham to the present day; only in the days of the highest civilization, when the canals were kept in order by the Babylonian kings, part of what is now marsh-land was a fertile and inhabited district. The bas-reliefs of the time of Sennacherib and Sardanapalus give pictures of the country which closely agree with the words of M. de Sarzec; we see the same streams flowing among the reeds, which formed a convenient hiding-place

for fugitives in time of war ; and the date-palms growing by the waterside are not absent from the scene. Strabo's account of the region in the time of Christ presents the same features :—

“It thus happens that the overflow of the rivers covers the plains towards the sea, and produces lakes and marshes and beds of reeds, out of which all sorts of baskets are manufactured.”

As for the palm, it was so common that it provided the chief part of the food of the people—

“The country produces barley in greater luxuriance than any other, for it is said to bear three hundred-fold ; but all other food is provided by the palm-tree, from which come bread, wine, vinegar, honey, meal, and all sorts of ropes and mats ; coppersmiths use the date-kernels as fuel, while the same, steeped in water, are given as food to oxen and sheep. They say that there is a Persian song in which three hundred and sixty uses for the palm-tree are reckoned up.” *

This extensive use of dates as food is illustrated by the contract tablets of Babylonia, which are frequently occupied with sales of loads of dates, or payment of dates as tribute to temples. The fermented juice of the date was called *shikaru* by the Babylonians, as it is still named *sakar* by the Arabs : the same word is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with wine, and translated “strong drink” in the Authorized Version. In the Gospel of Saint Luke the same Semitic word *sikera* is used, where it is said that John the Baptist

“shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.”

* Strabo, xvi. l.

Even at the present day the peasantry of Chaldæa chiefly subsist on dates pressed into cakes, and drink the *sakar*, or spirituous liquor made of the same fruit, from which they also prepare a sort of molasses, or honey, as in Strabo's time.

During the year 1880 M. de Sarzec and his band of excavators succeeded in laying bare almost the whole of the great building concealed under the principal mound of Tello, and in finding nine large statues, the first Babylonian sculptures of importance that had yet been discovered. During the course of the same year, his work was interrupted by an attack of marsh fever, the scourge of this annually inundated region; but in the autumn, and in the spring of 1881, he had resumed his diggings, and disinterred other smaller buildings in the neighbouring mounds. Meanwhile, the attention of the scientific world had been drawn to the new discoveries, and the French Government had become interested in the work of the vice-consul. Accordingly, in May, 1882, M. Jules Ferry proposed a grant for the purchase of the antiquities discovered, and the Chambers voted in favour of it. The statues and other objects were placed in the Louvre, and M. Léon Heuzey, the keeper of the Oriental department, was entrusted with the care of them.

It is chiefly from the results of M. Heuzey's study of the Chaldæan remains brought to Paris by M. de Sarzec that the rest of Europe has become acquainted with the importance of the new find. The buildings, sculptures, bronzes, and inscriptions of Tello were the

first extensive remains discovered of that early Chaldæan civilization, the beginnings of which belong to a period of culture probably exceeding in antiquity that of any other region. To the Biblical student, above all, these monuments possess the highest interest, for they throw some light on the early culture of that country from which the Hebrew race proceeded: the country of the patriarch Abraham. Mukeyyer, the remains of that city of Ur which is now generally identified with Ur of the Chaldees, lies only fifteen hours to the south of Tello; the kings of Ur were at a certain period the rulers of Lagash, as Tello was called in ancient times. The objects and inscriptions found by M. de Sarzec belong to various periods, covering many centuries, and it may well be that some of them are actually of the date when Abraham left Ur, and journeyed towards the west. The town of Lagash seems to have been founded in the very earliest period of civilization; and yet the palace, at any rate, seems actually to have been restored and inhabited many years after the conquest of Alexander, by the Græco-Parthian kings of Characene. Above all, such discoveries as that of Tello give us good reason to hope that, when once the mounds which dot the alluvial plains of Chaldæa are fully excavated, sufficient material will be found to re-construct the history of that region from the very origin of civilization.

No peoples have been so careful to preserve records of their deeds as the Babylonians and Assyrians. The materials upon which they chose to write, clay and stone, are qualified to last to the end of time, and the

almost superstitious reverence which they themselves had for their records guarded the latter from wilful destruction. This is what makes the cuneiform inscriptions of such exceptional interest and value to the historian. Many statements in ancient authors indicate the completeness of the series of chronological records preserved by the Chaldæans. Berosus says that his countrymen possessed documents covering a period of 150,000 years, and containing histories of the heavens, of the seas, of the creation of man, and of the kings of Babylon; and there are frequent proofs in the cuneiform inscriptions of the existence of historical accounts (which modern explorers, however, have not yet had the good fortune to discover) reaching back to remote epochs. The clay cylinders on which the Babylonian and Assyrian monarchs had the records of their wars and buildings inscribed were carefully buried in cavities made on purpose to contain them, in the basement of their palaces or temples; and these documents always end with the injunction, addressed to any future sovereign who shall, in repairing the building, discover the hiding-place of the cylinder, to replace it carefully, with religious rites; if he should fail to do so, the curse of the gods is invoked upon his head. The same expressions are used in the inscribed tablets which were put up on the walls of the palaces and temples, to proclaim to every visitor the exploits of the king. Thus Ramman-Nirari I., who reigned over Assyria in the fourteenth century before Christ, declares at the end of an inscription on a slab, found in the Temple

of Ashur, among the ruins of the city of Ashur, one of the ancient capitals of the country :—

“For future days: let future princes, if this place shall grow old and fall into decay, restore the ruins, and replace my tablet and the inscription of my name, then will Ashur hear their prayers; but if any shall erase my name and write his own name in its place, or if he shall remove my tablet, destroy it, throw it into the river, or burn it with fire may Ashur, the high god, who inhabits the temple of Eharsagkurkura: may Anu, Bel, Ea, and Ishtar, the great gods: may the Igigi of heaven and the Anunnaki of earth strike him with their hands, curse him with an evil curse, destroy his name, his seed, his power, and his family in the land; may destruction of his land, ruin to his people and his territory, come forth out of their holy mouth; may Rimmon punish him with storms of rain, and send floods, evil winds, rebellion, oppression, famine into his land. . . . ”

We have several proofs that the princes who kept the palaces and temples in repair, through fear, perhaps, that these curses might be fulfilled, had the greatest respect for the records of their predecessors, even when they belonged to dynasties different from their own. It was, without doubt, a foundation-cylinder, or a tablet which informed Tiglath-Pileser I. of the date of the erection of a temple which he restored in Ashur, his capital :—

“At that time the temple of Anu and Rimmon, the great gods, my lords, which Shamshi-Ramman, the priestly governor of Ashur, son of Ishmi-Dagan, the priestly governor of Ashur, had built, had gradually, during six hundred and forty-one years, been falling into ruin. Ashur-dan, king of Assyria, had pulled that temple down, but had not re-built it; for sixty years its foundations had not been laid.

“At the beginning of my reign, Anu and Rimmon, the great gods, my lords, commanded me to restore their sanctuary. I had bricks

made, cleared the ground, and laid the foundations of strong stone from the mountains."

Historical records, carefully preserved for more than sixteen centuries, enabled Sardanapalus to know the history of a certain image of the goddess Nana, long before carried away from Babylonia, and recovered by him in his campaign against the Elamites in B.C. 648, upon the capture of Susa, their capital.

"Kudurnankhundi the Elamite, who did not honour the name of the great gods, relying in his madness on his own power, laid his hand upon the temples of Accad and laid waste the land of Accad. . . . But the days were fulfilled, the time appointed arrived, the great gods saw what had occurred, and took revenge, after sixteen hundred and thirty-five years, for the destruction wrought by the Elamites. They sent me, Sardanapalus the prince, their worshipper, to ravage the land of Elam, and placed in my hand a pitiless weapon."

The great re-builder of ancient temples among the Babylonian monarchs was the last of the latter : namely, Nabonidus. In his work of restoration he more than once came upon the records of ancient sovereigns, which he carefully restored to their place. Thus, in describing the repairs which he executed at the ancient Temple of the Sun, which had not only fallen into ruin, but had actually been buried under a covering of dust, like that which conceals the ruined edifices of Babylonia at the present day, Nabonidus tells us that he found records of Burnaburyash and of Khammurabi.

"I beheld within it the written name of Khammurabi, the old king, who, seven hundred years before Burnaburyash, had erected the temple of the sun and the tower upon the old foundation."

From this passage the date of Khammurabi is fixed at about B.C. 2200. In a temple at Sippara, Nabonidus found inscriptions of Shagashaltiyash, who, he says, reigned eight hundred years before. These inscriptions had been vainly sought for by Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar; Nabonidus carefully restored them to their place, in company with his own records. Among the remains of the staged tower at Ur, Nabonidus found inscriptions of Dungi, the ancient king of that city. In the city of Kharran Nabonidus rebuilt a temple, which had formerly been restored by Sardanapalus; the latter king had, so Nabonidus tells us, found there the buried cylinder of Shalmaneser II. (B.C. 860-825):—

“I summoned men from all parts, from Gaza, on the borders of Egypt, on the upper sea beyond the Euphrates, to the lower sea: the kings, princes, governors, and men from all parts, whom the moon-god and the sun-god, my lords, and the goddess Ishtar, my lady, had subjected to me, to build Ekhulkhul, the house of the moon-god, my lord and helper, which stands in the city of Kharran, and which Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, the prince who preceded me, had built. In a favourable month, on the appointed day which the sun-god and Rimmon had announced to me in a dream, I laid the foundation of the temple, and built up its brick-work, in the wisdom of Ea and Merodach, with incantations, with the art of the brick-god, the lord of foundation stones and of bricks, . . . with joy and exultation, upon the inscribed foundations of Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, who had discovered here the inscribed foundations of Shalmaneser, son of Ashurnasirpal. With palm-wine, grape-wine, oil, and honey I sprinkled the walls. More than the kings my fathers, I strengthened its walls and adorned its structure.”

Among the temples restored by Nabonidus, there was one of almost inconceivable antiquity: namely, that

of the sun-god at Sippara; we know from the contracts that the priests of this sanctuary possessed great wealth; nevertheless, at this time it was very much "out of repair":—

"I brought the sun-god out of his temple, and placed him in another house; I pulled down that temple and sought for its old inscribed cylinder. I made excavations to the depth of eighteen cubits beneath the ground, and there the sun-god allowed me to find the inscriptions of Naram-Sin, son of Sargon, which for three thousand two hundred years no king who preceded me had found."

The figures here given by Nabonidus, which would make the date of Sargon about 3,800 years before Christ, have naturally excited astonishment and some incredulity among modern scholars. But when we consider the exactness with which the Babylonians seem to have made their calculations, and the care with which they preserved their records, it seems rash to put the chronology of Nabonidus too lightly aside. Moreover, even if this particular date should appear a little too remote, there are many other reasons for thinking that Sargon and Naram-Sin lived, at any rate, many centuries before Khammurabi, who was king of Babylon about B.C. 2200.

It may be hoped that these few extracts from the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions give some idea of the care with which these people preserved their official records, written on the cylinders that were buried among the foundations, and on the slabs that adorned the walls of the palaces and temples. We have other proofs, however, among the cuneiform inscriptions, of

the completeness of the system of chronology which the priests of Ashur and Bel possessed. Besides duplicate copies, which were kept in the royal libraries, of the records on the cylinders and slabs, and besides other documents of an historical character, which were composed from time to time, such as the "synchronous history" of Babylonia and Assyria, or the "Babylonian Chronicle," lists of kings and governors have been found, which are of as much importance for chronology as the Roman lists of consuls. The Assyrians named each year after some governor, high official, or the king himself, who thus became the eponym for that year, like the first archon at Athens; and lists of such eponyms have been found at Nineveh, covering the period from the beginning of the ninth century before Christ to the middle of the seventh. The king was always eponym for one of the years of his reign. One of these lists adds in a few words the chief events of each year; and an eclipse of the sun, mentioned in the ninth year of Ashur-dan, king of Assyria, and identified by modern astronomers with the almost total eclipse, visible at Nineveh, which occurred on June 15th, B.C. 763, has enabled the Assyrian chronology to be brought into relation with our era, and also to be compared with the chronological list of Babylonian kings in Greek, known as the Canon of Ptolemy, and drawn up in the course of the second century after Christ, with the result that the clay tablet and the Greek list are shown to agree in the most satisfactory manner. The Canon of Ptolemy also agrees with the lists of

Babylonian kings written on clay tablets, which give the number of the years that they reigned.

All that we know, then, of the chronological system of the Babylonians induces us to put a certain confidence in their statements of dates.

The connection of this discussion on the reliability of the Babylonian dates with Tello will appear when it is learnt that inscriptions of Naram-Sin, who, according to Nabonidus, reigned before B.C. 3700, have been found among these ruins by M. de Sarzec. Buried in a pile of masonry belonging to restorations of a comparatively late date, he discovered an alabaster vase inscribed with the words:

“Naram-Sin, king of the four regions,”

that is to say, of the north, south, east, and west, according to the title adopted by the later monarchs of Babylonia and Assyria. The capital of Naram-Sin and his father Sargon seems to have been Agane, close to Sippara, on a canal, called by Pliny Narragas, which unites the Tigris with the Euphrates some distance to the north of Babylon; but the dominion of these kings appears to have extended far beyond the walls of their city. They were undoubtedly of Semitic race: this is clear from their own names, and from the Semitic language of the few inscriptions which have been found of their time, including a second alabaster vase, bearing the name of Naram-Sin, found by M. Oppert, but afterwards lost in the Tigris, and the famous egg-shaped object of variegated steatite, dedicated by Sargon to

the Temple of the Sun at Sippara; the latter is now in the British Museum.

Other inscriptions from Tello would seem, to judge from the form of the cuneiform character, of an even



FRAGMENT OF THE VULTURE-STELA.

more remote date than Naram-Sin. They belong to a time when Tello, then called Sirpulla, or Lagash, was the head of an independent State, for they bear the names of Khaldu, Ur-Nina, and Akurgal, kings of that city. Some of the slabs on which these inscriptions are engraved bear rude sculptures in relief, belonging to the very earliest period of art. The "Eagle and

Lion tablet," of the time of Ur-Nina, exhibits an eagle with its claws fixed into the backs of two lions, facing different ways: an almost heraldic device. The "Vulture-Stela," carved in the time of the son of the last-named monarch, is a more important monument. It formed, when it was complete, a slab of considerable height and breadth, three inches thick, carved and inscribed on both sides; the chief scene represented appears to be the burial of a pile of corpses after a battle; priests, or their attendants, carrying baskets on their heads in the attitude of the Athenian *canephoroe*, bring sacrificial offerings for the dead, according to the wide-spread custom of antiquity; above, in the air, hover a flock of vultures, holding human limbs and heads in their beaks and claws.

The inscriptions on these monuments of the kings and governors of Lagash are in the Accadian language. We have seen in an earlier chapter that the cuneiform characters and the system of writing in use among the Assyrians and Babylonians were ill-suited to the needs of a Semitic language, and were probably derived from a non-Semitic race. Here, in these monuments from Tello, we see this very non-Semitic race living among the cities of Babylonia, and apparently, for a time, independent in certain parts of its Semitic neighbours.

There was a great mixture of races in Chaldæa from the earliest times, according to the testimony of Berosus. The Book of Genesis indicates to us which were the principal branches of the human family that inhabited that region; they were two entirely distinct

stems: the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham, and the descendants of Asshur, the son of Shem.

“And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

“He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord.

“And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

“Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,

“And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.”

Now, it was the descendants of Cush, the Accadians, who appear to have made the first advances in civilization; so much so that the Assyrians and Semitic Babylonians borrowed from them their system of writing and their sacred literature. Ur was a Semitic city, if we may judge from the inscriptions and from the names of many of her kings; and this inference would agree with the Biblical account of Ur of the Chaldees as the home of the family of Abraham. There is a small votive tablet of black stone which contains a purely Semitic inscription of the time of Dungi:

“Dungi the powerful, king of Ur and king of the four regions, who has built Eshitlam, the temple of Nergal, his lord, at Cutha.”

Lagash, on the other hand, seems to have been a centre of Accadian civilization, for all the inscriptions found there are in the Accadian language. As far as it is possible, too, to conclude from the sculptures found at Tello, the type of the inhabitants was quite distinct from that of the Semitic Babylonians and Assyrians,

so familiar to us from the bas-reliefs of Nineveh. But the intercourse of the two races must have begun at a very early period. Sargon and Naram-Sin had already borrowed the Accadian system of writing. Lagash was conquered by the kings of Ur, as Ur itself was taken by the kings of Nisin and Larsa. What we can learn, then, of the civilization of Lagash must throw some light upon the state of culture of the rest of Chaldæa.

The period during which Lagash was subject to the kings of Ur and other neighbouring monarchs is marked in the inscriptions of Tello by the disappearance in them of the title of king, and the substitution for it of the designation *patesi*, or priestly governor.

But though, instead of kings, we soon begin to find *patesis*, or priestly governors of Lagash, the latter seem to have been hereditary chieftains, enjoying considerable freedom, and acting with the independence of feudal princes. They inscribed their names on the buildings they erected in the same manner as the kings. The oldest of the *patesis*, to judge from the form of the written character, were En-annadu, his son, Entena, and his grandson, also named En-annadu.

Of the time when Lagash was subject to the kings of Ur we have one or two inscriptions which clearly state the political subjection of the city. There is a cylindrical seal which has long been known to archæologists; the inscription which it bears is thus translated:—

“To the god Adar, the mighty lord of Lagash, Kilulla-guzala, son of Urbabi, has dedicated this for the life of Dungi, the powerful prince, the king of Ur.”

Another inscription was found by M. de Sarzec; it runs as follows:—

“To . . . daughter of the goddess Bau, his Lady, for the preservation of the life of Dungi, the powerful warrior, king of Ur, king of Sumer and Accad, Ghala-lammu, son of Lukani, priestly governor of Lagash [offers this].”

The title “King of Sumer and Accad” implies sovereignty over the principal regions of Babylonia, and was one of the titles borne by all later kings who ruled over Babylonia, such as Sargon, Esarhaddon, Sardanapalus, Nabopolassar, and Cyrus.

But the most flourishing period of Lagash seems to have been the time when Gudea was *patesi*, or priestly governor, over this city: at least, if we may judge from the remains which M. de Sarzec has discovered, and from others acquired before his excavations, and now to be seen at the British Museum. The great palace laid bare by the French vice-consul is built principally with bricks impressed with the stamp of Gudea, the only exceptions being certain parts built by Ur-Bau, one of his predecessors or successors, and much later restorations by the Græco-Parthian princes of Characene. A short description of the palace of Gudea may, perhaps, be given here.

The palace stands on an immense quadrangular platform of unbaked bricks, two hundred and eighteen yards square and thirteen yards high; the cement employed was liquid clay, which has so united itself with the unburnt bricks as to form a mass very nearly homogeneous. The sides of the platform slope con-

siderably from the plain, and are ascended by a steep staircase. The orientation of the building is worth remark, for, like the later edifices of Mesopotamia, but unlike the Egyptian temples, its four corners, not its sides, face the four cardinal points. Upon the platform stands the house (57 yards by 33 yards), built of baked bricks, which have become red and yellow in colour by their passage through the kiln; they all bear on their lower surface the name and titles of Gudea. The north-eastern façade is evidently the principal one, for it has two wide entrances, and is decorated in the peculiar Chaldæan style also observed at Eridu and at Erech, by a continuous series of semi-circular projections, like half-columns, which vary the whole surface of the wall. The outer walls of the edifice are more than two yards thick, and give immense solidity to the structure. The arrangement of the rooms is much like that of later Assyrian or modern Oriental palaces; they are built round court-yards of different sizes, into which they open; all the light they receive is from the door-ways, for there are no windows. The apartments around the largest of the court-yards evidently formed the *selamlık*, if we may borrow the Turkish term: the part, namely, reserved for the prince and his male attendants, and including the reception-rooms. A smaller court-yard forms the centre of the harem; in this ovens were found. A third group of chambers composed the *Khan*, or offices and lodgings of the slaves. The rooms were probably vaulted, but no trace of the roof now remains; they were paved with bricks, and before all the principal

doors lay a threshold of marble or alabaster. The absence of architectural decoration is very remarkable; if there was any adornment, it must have consisted chiefly in draperies. The superstition of the inhabitants of this gloomy mansion is shown by the votive figures, tablets, and amulets found buried beneath the brick pavement, sometimes in cavities constructed on purpose to receive them.

None of the doors which formerly closed the entrances into the chambers were found; they had been constructed of wood and bound with copper; but the sockets in which their pivots turned were discovered in many cases, and sometimes still in position. These sockets are rough blocks of diorite, the upper surface of which is smoothed and hollowed out in the middle to receive the bronze point of the door-post; by the side of the hollow, Gudea's name, with a votive inscription, is inscribed. The roughness of the blocks, compared with certain peculiarities of the statues carved out of the same material, shows very clearly that the diorite was not hewn out of a quarry, but simply found in natural pieces of various sizes, which were fashioned into human figures, or door-sockets, or stands for vessels, according to the facilities that they offered for such a transformation.

The works of art found by M. de Sarzec at Tello are divided by M. Heuzey into three classes: those which belong to an epoch of rudeness and simplicity; those which exhibit a sobriety of style and *technique*, and already prove the acquisition of considerable skill; and those which show

a studied delicacy and refinement of execution, belonging to an advanced period. The last class is, unfortunately, only represented by a few fragments, which tantalize us with the desire for more. The first class is represented by the "Vulture-stela" described above, and by other monuments of similar character; but to the second class belong the most important works of art found at Tello: namely, the nine statues of Gudea, governor of Lagash. These figures are proved, by the inscriptions which cover part of the drapery and the benches on which they sit, to have been placed in different temples, as marks of devotion to certain deities; they probably stood opposite to the images of the gods, and hence the attitude of submission, with clasped hands, which marks them. At a very late epoch they must have been brought within the walls of the palace, and placed in the court-yard where they were discovered. It is much to be regretted, in the interests of archæology, that the heads have in all cases been broken off by some invader who overthrew the dynasty of Gudea; but this misfortune is partly repaired by the discovery of two heads at a distance from the statues.

The first thing to remark about these figures is the material out of which they are carved. On the alluvial plains of Chaldæa, where hardly a pebble is to be found, it is startling to find, belonging to the earliest days of civilization, works of art consisting of a hard volcanic stone, which is only to be procured from the interior of Asia or from the mountains of Egypt. It is a kind of diorite, only less hard than granite and porphyry,

analogous to that of which Egyptian statues were frequently fashioned; and examination of the inscriptions shows that, in fact, this stone was brought from the "land of Magan," a territory which lay on the coasts of Egypt or in the peninsula of Sinai. This at once says much for the navigation and commerce of those remote days. In spite of the difficulty of working with such material, the artist has treated his figures with considerable skill; he has even indicated the folds of the drapery: a point neglected both by the later Assyrians and the Egyptians, and first studied to advantage by the Greeks.

The costume of Gudea, as it is represented in his statues, consists simply of a fringed shawl. One end of this lies over the left shoulder in front; the shawl is then passed round the back and under the right arm, which is left bare; the other end is again brought round under the right arm, and tucked inside that part of the garment which crosses the breast, thus firmly keeping the whole in place. The Roman toga was differently worn, for it was flung over the left shoulder, brought round behind under the right arm, and again passed over the left shoulder, so that the end hung down the back. M. Heuzey remarks that the dress of Gudea offers a valuable study for artists depicting Biblical scenes of the earliest period. A curious representation of fringed shawls worn exactly as we see them in the figures of Gudea appears in the well-known painting on the wall of one of the tombs at Beni-Hasan, in Egypt. The date of this fresco is, perhaps,

not far from that of the statues of Tello; it is of the twelfth dynasty, and probably some centuries before B.C. 2000. The wearers of the fringed shawls in the painting are members of an Asiatic tribe, bringing presents to the governor of an Egyptian province; they are thus described by Prisse d'Avennes:—

“The second tomb, that of Naharse-Numhotep, military governor and nomarch of the province, is especially interesting, both as a work of art and on account of the valuable information it offers for the history of the country.

“On the north wall the artist has painted a band of foreigners in the act of being presented to Numhotep by two Egyptian functionaries, the first of whom is a royal scribe, holding in his hand a tablet covered with hieroglyphics. The nomarch, leaning carelessly on a staff, and surrounded by his dogs, is giving an uncere- monious reception to the strangers, who have, apparently, been attracted to Egypt by the report of the fertility of the Nile Valley. They have a peculiar physiognomy, aquiline noses, and a fair complexion; they are dressed in rich stuffs, with head-dress and shoes like those of the figures on Greek vases. First come two chiefs leading antelopes: one of them is named Absha; the other is remarkable for a pearl attached to the end of his beard. Then come four warriors, armed with lances, bows, and clubs. Then follow four women clothed in variegated tunics, preceded by a young man driving before him an ass, which carries two children, placed in a sort of pannier. Last comes an ass loaded with household vessels, led by a man playing a lyre, and followed by a warrior armed with a bow and a club.

“This curious ethnographical picture, carefully painted more than two thousand years before our era, has been variously interpreted by travellers and authors. Some have seen here the arrival of the Hebrews, or of Joseph himself; others have thought that they could recognise the Ionian type. The group seems at first sight to represent Greeks, but there are points that do not agree with this idea, which was that of Champollion, who even thought he could read in the inscription the word *Iuni*: Ionians. At the present

Two of the seated statues of Gudea hold upon their knees tablets and *styli*, or pointed instruments for writing. Upon one of these tablets is carefully marked out the ground plan of a building of which we see the walls, the towers, and the gates; at the side lies the graduated rule that was employed for measurement. This figure of Gudea represents the prince, in fact, as dedicating to the gods his architectural work: as offering to them the plans of buildings which he had designed, and the drawing materials with which they were marked out and measured. The inscriptions with which—in accordance with the Mesopotamian custom—the drapery of the statues and the benches on which they sit are covered, are chiefly composed of the enumeration of various temples built by Gudea, which he thus dedicates to the gods. The most interesting of the figures—namely, the statue of the prince as architect, to which allusion has just been made—exhibits a long inscription, engraved, as they all are, in the clearest and most beautiful characters, of which the hard diorite has preserved almost every line unimpaired. It begins as follows:—

“In the temple of the god Nin-girsu, his king, [is placed] this statue of Gudea, priestly governor of Lagash, who has built the temple of Eninnu. One *ka* of fermented drink, one *ka* of provisions . . . , half a *ka* of . . . half a *ka* of . . . such are the offerings that he makes. . . .

“To the god Ningirsu, the mighty warrior of the god Ellillu, [this is dedicated by] Gudea, architect (?), and priestly governor of Lagash; the shepherd elected by the immovable will of the god Ningirsu; beheld with a favourable eye by the goddess Nina; gifted with power by the god Nindara; covered with renown by the

goddess Bau ; son of the goddess Gatumdug ; endowed with sovereignty and the sceptre of supremacy by the god Gal-alim ; proclaimed afar among living creatures by the god Dunsaga ; whose government is placed upon a solid foundation by the god Ningiszida his god."

The inscription then relates the construction of a temple by Gudea, and the solemnities and purifications that took place at the time of its dedication. No mourning was allowed during this period.

"No grave was dug in the burying-ground of the city ; no corpse was interred (?). The *kalu* did not perform his funeral music or utter his lamentations ; the wailing-woman did not allow her lamentation to be heard."

Gudea describes the materials he had brought from various countries for his building operations :—

"The god Ningirsu opened to him the roads from the sea of Elam to the lower sea. In the mountains of Amanus, the mountain of cedars, he had cedar-trees of great height cut down. . . . These cedars he employed to make great gates ; he enriched them with shining ornaments, and placed them in the temple of Eninnu. Others he used as beams in the sanctuary of Emahkia.

"From the mountains of Phœnicia he brought stones and had them carved into blocks ; he made of them the holy of holies of the temple of Eninnu. From Tidanum in the mountains of Phœnicia he brought *shirgal habbia* stones ; he had them carved into the form of *urpadda*, and arranged them for the purpose of receiving the bars of the gates. In the country of Kagāl-adda, in the mountains of Kimash, he had copper extracted. . . . From the country of Meroe he brought trees. . . .

"By his arms he conquered the city of Anshan, in the land of Elam ; its spoils he dedicated to the god Nin-girsu in the temple of Eninnu. . . .

"From the mountains of the land of Magan he had hard stone brought, and had it carved into a statue of himself. 'O, my king, whose temple I have built, may life be my reward !' such was the



STATUE OF GUDEA AS ARCHITECT.

name that he gave to this statue, and in the temple of Eninnu he placed it."

This long inscription ends with a curse upon those who shall injure the statue or remove it from its place in the temple; and this malediction is in the style of those which the Assyrian and late Babylonian kings invoked on all who should disturb their records.

On another statue Gudea speaks of a New Year's festival which he celebrated in honour of the principal goddess:—

"To Ningirsu, the powerful warrior of Ellilla, [this is dedicated] by Gudea, priestly governor of Lagash, who has constructed the temple of Eninnu, consecrated to Ningirsu.

"For Ningirsu, his lord, he has built the temple of Ekhud, the tower in stages, from the summit of which Ningirsu grants him a happy lot.

"Besides the offerings which Gudea made of his free will to Ningirsu and to the goddess Bau, daughter of Anna, his beloved consort, he has made others to his god Ningiszida.

"Gudea, priestly governor of Lagash, declared peace from Girsu to Uru-azagga.

"That year he had a block of rare stone brought from the country of Magan; he had it carved into a statue of himself.

"On the day of the beginning of the year, the day of the festival of Bau, on which offerings were made; one calf, one fat sheep, three lambs, six full grown sheep, two rams, seven *pat* of dates, 7 *sab* of cream, seven palm buds. . . .

"Such were the offerings made to the goddess Bau in the ancient temple on that day. . . ."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS.

THE most remarkable archæological discovery of the last few years has, without doubt, been that of the collection of letters, written in the cuneiform character and in the Babylonian language on clay tablets, which lay buried beneath the ground in the neighbourhood of the modern village of Tell el-Amarna, on the Nile. It is said that a countrywoman lighted upon these treasures by chance; but they quickly found their way into the hands of European collectors. Dr. Budge obtained eighty of the finest and best preserved of the tablets for the British Museum; the Royal Museum at Berlin acquired a share of the spoil; and the Egyptian Museum, which has recently been removed from Boulak to Gizeh, received a smaller number. A few also were purchased by private collectors: for instance, those of M. Bouriant, and one which M. Maspero has presented to the Louvre.

The site of Tell el-Amarna, the modern Arab village situated, nearly 190 miles to the south of Cairo, in a sandy plain between the mountain chain, which here recedes in the form of a bay, and the eastern bank of the Nile, has long been known to Egyptologists for its

ancient remains, and especially for the tombs hewn in the sides of the neighbouring hills. About fifteen centuries before Christ, as far as the date can be ascertained, there stood on this spot a city which for the time being held the rank of the capital of Egypt and of her dependent States. Amen-hetep, or, in the Greek form, Amenophis IV., the ninth king of the eighteenth dynasty, who was then reigning, had departed from the traditions of his forefathers, and had adopted a new religion of foreign origin, which enjoined the worship of *Aten*, or the Sun's Disk, and rejected that of Amen, the great god of Egypt, whose name accordingly the monarch erased from the walls of the temples. Amenophis IV. went so far as to change his own name to Chu-en-Aten, or the "Splendour of the Sun's Disk." He abandoned the great city of Thebes, which the kings of his dynasty had done so much to enlarge and beautify, and he founded, on the site of the modern Tell el-Amarna, a new capital, which he called by his own new designation, Chu-en-Aten. But after his death, this town, which usurped for so brief a reign the place of Thebes, was soon abandoned in its turn, and in consequence of this sudden desertion it has left much clearer traces behind than greater cities which have fallen slowly into decay, or been razed to the ground by victorious besiegers. Memphis has disappeared; but the streets and buildings of Chu-en-Aten can still in part be traced. The following description of the remains is given by Prisse d'Avennes:—

"The ruins now left of this second Heliopolis are more than a mile and a quarter long and half a mile broad. The town was divided from north to south by a wide street, cut at right angles by cross streets, which marked off the houses and other buildings into numerous quarters. The principal quarter lay to the north, and contained temples and various other buildings, one of which is especially remarkable for its numerous pillars of brick-work, showing the plan of the hypostyle halls that stood here ; it was probably a palace, but it is impossible at the present day to determine its exact form and arrangement.

"The temples were enclosed within walls of burnt brick, like most of the great edifices of this epoch, but ruins and traces of the walls are all that is now left, and the stone structures have been so completely demolished that there is no clear outline of their inner arrangements.

"Several dwellings of unburnt brick, however, have not been entirely destroyed, but have escaped the hand of man and the ravages of time ; little more than the sub-structures remain of them, but these are still able to give a fairly exact idea of their form and distribution. These are the best preserved and the most ancient dwellings in the valley of the Nile.

"In this capital of Chu-en-Aten, erected with all speed in order to form a centre for the new sun-worship, far from the haunts of the traditional ideas which were so constantly evoked by the monuments of Thebes, the builders were forced to employ the most readily available materials ; and accordingly sun-dried bricks play a large part in all the structures.

"In one of the principal streets the two piers are to be seen, which formed the sides of a pylon ; the colossal gateway, twelve yards wide, can only have been surmounted by a vault made up of several concentric arches, like those of the pylons at El Assacif and Thebes. The walls are eight yards thick ; the bricks are very carefully laid ; and although they are composed of a somewhat sandy clay, they are, even at the present day, hard enough to be used by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood."

After this description of the remains of the town, it may, perhaps, not be unacceptable to give from the

same source a short account of some of the paintings on the walls of the tombs at Tell el-Amarna, which belong to the same period, and refer to the reign of Amenophis IV. The following scene represents the monarch in the act of making offerings to the Sun's Disk :—

“At first, the most striking feature in this picture, which is arranged with remarkable taste, is the irradiation of the sun, represented by means of divergent lines, terminating in hands holding the sacred sign of life, or simply open to bless the chief personages of the royal family and to accept their offerings. Three altars, loaded with food and flowers, divide the scene into two principal compartments. On the left, the Pharaoh Chu-en-Aten and his wife, both holding in their hands emblems that have since been effaced, take part in a religious ceremony in honour of Aten-ra, the irradiating sun, which, at this epoch, through the special devotion of the Pharaoh who is here depicted, represented the sole and exclusive divinity of Egypt. Behind the queen, two young princesses, her daughters, seem to be taking part in the ceremony with all the inattention proper to their age: that is to say, that they are playing with one another. On the right, the queen-mother, Thi, is represented with one of her grandchildren—the Princess Aten-bek—at her side, apparently offering her a basket.

“The lower compartment of the picture is half filled with a row of secondary figures, who, according to the custom of antiquity, are represented as of smaller stature than the royal family. They are the king's officers, female musicians, and servants busied in the preparation of offerings. The picture was never completed, perhaps on account of the premature death of the person for whom this tomb was prepared; or, perhaps, on account of the political and religious reaction which overthrew the capital of Chu-en-Aten, and put an end to the exclusive worship of the Sun's Disk.”

Another painting in a tomb at the same place exhibits a royal chariot drawn by a pair of horses: a subject which may be of interest in consequence of the

frequent mention in the Tell el-Amarna tablets of gifts of this kind from the princes of Mesopotamia to the king of Egypt at this period.

“Compared with the superb beasts of the feline or bovine species which were sculptured and painted at this same epoch, these horses are depicted with incredible *naïveté* and awkwardness. It might be thought that the artist had never studied living models, and yet he had such every day before his eyes. However it may be, these horses may be reckoned among the finest of the eighteenth dynasty. They are represented walking: a pace which does not offer the beautiful curves seen in the gallop.

“Besides the painting of the horses, the picture gives a good example of the harness and chariots, which at this period showed an admirable mixture of simplicity and elegance.

“The chariot is not decorated, but simply provided with a wide case to contain the bow, and painted modestly with the favourite colours of the Egyptians. Mention is made in the inscriptions of this date of chariots enriched with gold, silver, and agate, which came from the countries of Ruten (Syria) and Naharina (Mesopotamia). The harness—much simpler than it is generally seen—is covered with embroideries designed with as much sobriety as taste.”

Much astonishment was naturally excited by the discovery of cuneiform inscriptions on the site of this old Egyptian town; and the first question to be answered was to what period they were to be assigned. The fact that they were found at Tell el-Amarna made it at first probable that they belonged to the time of Amenophis IV., in whose reign alone the city of Chuen-Aten had been a place of importance; and it was found, in fact, that several of the letters were addressed to “Nibmuariya” or “Nimmuriya, king of Egypt,” and that others were intended for the perusal of “Napkhurriya” or “Napkhurriya.” These names,

allowing for the difficulty which the Babylonians and Assyrians had in reproducing Egyptian words, were seen to represent, although in an outlandish form, the additional names or prenomens which Amenophis IV. and his father, Amenophis III., assumed on their accession to the throne: namely, Nefer-kheper-ra and Neb-mat-ra. The matter was settled by a seal bearing the prenom of Amenophis IV. written in the ordinary way, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and some plaques of glazed faïence exhibiting the prenom of Amenophis III., also in hieroglyphics, which were found in the company of the cuneiform inscriptions. The clay tablets were recognised to belong to the period of these two monarchs, and accordingly a date was assigned to them of fifteen hundred years—perhaps a little more and perhaps a little less—before our era. It must be admitted, indeed, that the chronology of this period of Egyptian history is somewhat uncertain.

In several respects the Tell el-Amarna tablets are unlike all other documents, inscribed with cuneiform characters, that had hitherto been discovered. The shape of many of them resembles small pillows of clay. The characters, too, vary from those that are to be seen in the inscriptions belonging to earlier or later periods; for few cuneiform inscriptions of this particular date are known. It is remarkable that several different forms of the same character are to be observed in these tablets; but, generally speaking, a difference of character here goes with a difference of origin; those tablets that come from one town or

country show the same forms. The characters appear often to have a more archaic appearance than those of the Assyrian inscriptions of the fourteenth or thirteenth centuries, which come next to them in date among the already known inscriptions from Assyria.

The Tell el-Amarna letters were sent from many parts of Western Asia to the court of Egypt. Some of them were written by the scribes of Babylonian princes, anxious to maintain friendship with the mighty Pharaoh, whose suzerainty extended to the banks of the Euphrates. One of them comes from a king of Assyria. Several of them were sent by kings of Mitâni and Alashiya—territories probably situated near the region of Mesopotamia. Most of them, however, are from the native governors of cities under the dominion of Egypt, in different parts of Syria, and the land of Canaan. This at once shows of what historical importance these documents are. They throw an entirely new light on the condition of Western Asia, and especially Syria and Canaan, at a period probably not long before the exodus of the Israelites. The Egyptian inscriptions of the eighteenth dynasty had already informed us of the conquests of the Pharaohs in that region from the reign of Aahmes (about B.C. 1700) to that of Thothmes III.; but for the reigns of Amenophis III. and his son we had very little information with regard to the events that took place among the Syrian tributaries; the Tell el-Amarna tablets, therefore, create a new chapter of history, interesting alike to the student of Egyptian and of Hebrew literature. The historical

results, however, will be discussed in subsequent chapters. For the present, it may be worth while to examine the general character of these early examples of the art of letter writing.

We here see the epistolary art in a very primitive stage; although letters had been written and despatched in Egypt for many centuries before this time,* and in the tombs of the ancient empire scribes are represented in paintings and sculptures folding up and sealing the small rolls of papyrus by means of which the inhabitants of the Nile Valley communicated with one another. It would be an interesting question to ask whether letters were first written in Egyptian hieroglyphics or in the cuneiform characters of Babylon. Perhaps, like the two systems of writing, the epistolary art had an independent origin in both cases. But the letters on the Tell el-Amarna tablets are written in the cuneiform character, and in the Babylonian language. They are distinct proofs that the whole of Western Asia was at this period under the influence of a form of culture which proceeded from the banks of the Euphrates, and that the speech of Babel was, like French in modern days, and like Greek after the Macedonian conquest, the medium of communication between civilized nations in the sixteenth or fifteenth century before Christ. With the language, the Syrians and Canaanites, without doubt, adopted the epistolary forms of the Mesopotamian valley, and, in

* For information on the letters of the ancient Egyptians see Maspero, *Le Genre épistolaire chez les anciens Égyptiens*.

fact, we find the letters written in Babylonia at an earlier date than this commencing in a similar or identical manner. Nevertheless, there are certain formulæ in the letters addressed by governors of towns to the Egyptian sovereign which were taken from the Court phraseology of Thebes.

The epistles of the Mesopotamian kings to the Pharaoh, among the Tell el-Amarna collection, begin with salutations as from one prince to another, his equal in station, if not in political power. The following is the manner in which Burraburyash, king of Babylon, begins a letter to Amenophis IV.:—

“To Nipkhurriya, king of Egypt, thus says Burraburyash, king of Karduniyash, thy brother: ‘It is well with me; may it be well indeed with thee, and may it be well indeed with thy household, thy wives, thy children, thy land, thy great men, thy horses, and thy chariots.’”

The king of Alashiya opens his letters with a rather more lengthy preamble; he begins thus:—

“To the king of Egypt, my brother, thus says the king of Alashiya, thy brother: ‘It is well with me; it is well indeed with my household, my wives, my children, my great men, my horses, and my chariots, and my lands; may my brother be well; may it be well with thy household, thy wives, thy children, thy great men, thy horses, thy chariots, and thy lands! Behold, my brother, I have sent my messenger to thee, in company with thy messenger, to the land of Egypt.’”

It is not without interest to notice that the mode of salutation usual in these ancient letters is that which was current among the Israelites, and has been preserved among the Semitic races to the present day.

“May my brother be well” should be literally translated, “Upon my brother be peace.” With the very same words Jacob enquired after his uncle Laban, asking of the people of Haran: “Is he well?” and they said “He is well”; or literally, “Is there peace to him?” and they said “There is peace.” The Hebrew *shâlôm* and the Babylonian *shulmu* are represented in modern Arabic by the word *salâm*. *Salâm aleik*, “Peace upon you,” is, to this day, the ordinary salutation of Mussulmans to one another.

The letters of the natives of Egypt also began with similar salutations; for instance:—

“The captain of mercenaries N. to the captain of mercenaries N.: ‘Mayest thou be in good health and in favour with Amen-Ra and the other gods.’”

It seems, however, to mark a distinction between the epistolary styles of Egypt and Babylon, that while the latter requires the epistle almost invariably to begin with the name of the person to whom it is addressed (“To such an one thus says such an one”), the former sets the name of the sender in the first place. On this point the Asiatics seem to give a lesson in good manners to their African neighbours.

Some of the letters discovered at Tell el-Amarna are those of a king of Mitâni who was connected through several marriages with the Pharaoh, and accordingly professes the affection of a kinsman in the preamble, which runs as follows in an epistle to Amenophis III.:—

“To Nimmuriya, the great king, king of Egypt, my brother and my son-in-law, who loves me and whom I love, thus says Tushratta,

the great king thy father-in-law, who loves thee, the king of Mitanni thy brother; 'I am well; mayest thou be well; may it be well with thy household; may it be well indeed with my sister and the rest of thy wives, with thy children, thy chariots, thy horses, thy great men, thy land, and all that belongs to thee.'"

One of Tushratta's letters is written to a queen of Egypt, apparently to Thi, the wife of Amenophis III., and mother of Amenophis IV. The writer offers salutations to his daughter Tâtum-khipa, who had been sent in marriage to Amenophis III., but on the death of the latter was handed over to his son and successor; he opens his epistle as follows:—

"To [Thi] the lady of the land of Egypt . . . thus says Tushratta, king of Mitâni: 'May it be well with thee; may it be well with [Amenophis IV.] thy son; may it be well with Tâtum-khipa, thy daughter-in-law; may it be well indeed with thy lands . . . and with all that thou hast.'"

There is only one letter from Assyria among the documents; it begins with a somewhat shorter preamble than the rest:—

"To Napkhuririya [the great king], king of Egypt, my brother; thus says Ashur-uballit, king of Assyria, the great king thy brother: 'May it be well with thee, with thy household, and with thy land.'"

The letters from Asiatic officials in the employment of the king of Egypt are naturally couched in terms different from those used by the royal personages, and we now meet with phrases borrowed from the court language of the ruling country. The Pharaoh was acknowledged in Egypt as the son of the sun-god, and even as being himself a god. There are many proofs of this in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the same date as

the Tell el-Amarna tablets, and alluding to the same kings. Amenophis III. actually acknowledges himself as the god of Nubia, and his son ascribes divinity to him in the inscriptions on the pylon of the temple of Soleb. In a papyrus, also, Amenophis III. is mentioned as one of the gods of Memphis, and on a certain stela his priests are named. The same honours were received by his ancestors. Thothmes III., the great conqueror of Western Asia, received divine adoration in his earliest youth, and sacrifice was offered to him by the scribe User-Amen, in his fifth year. Similar kinship with the gods was attributed under the following dynasty to Rameses II., for example, who is spoken of as :—

“Approved by the sun-god, the son of the sun-god, the eternal and everlasting, beloved by the gods Amen-ra-harmachis, Ptah of Memphis, Mut the lady of the city of Asru . . . who, like his father Harmachis, is king on the throne of Horus the living one for ever and ever.”

We must not be surprised, then, when we find the Canaanite governors of cities tributary to the king of Egypt addressing their suzerain in the following terms :—

“Rip-Adda says to the lord of the countries, the king of the countries, the great king, the king of the universe : ‘May the goddess Beltis of Byblus give power to the king, my lord. At the feet of my lord, my sun-god, I prostrate myself seven times and seven times.’”

Ammunira, governor of the city of Beyrout, thus begins his letter :—

“To the king, my lord, my sun-god, my gods ; thus says Ammunira, a man of the cities, thy servant and the dust of thy feet : ‘At

the feet of the king, my lord, my sun-god, my gods, seven times and seven times I fall.’”

The expression “my gods,” which is frequently found in these Canaanitish letters, is exceedingly remarkable, for it corresponds apparently to the Hebrew *Elohim*, God; and is, like the latter, a “plural of majesty.” Shubandi, another governor of a city, writes the following salutations at the head of his letter:—

“To the king, my lord, my gods, my sun-god, the sun who is from heaven; thus says Shubandi, thy servant, the dust of thy feet, the groom (?) of thy horses: ‘At the feet of the king, my lord, my sun-god from heaven, I bow seven times and seven times, with my heart and with my back.’”

The most extravagant terms of adulation are used by Abi-milki, the governor of Tyre, who begins his letter as follows:—

“To the king, my lord, my gods, my sun-god; thus says Abi-milki, thy servant: ‘Seven times and seven times I bow at the feet of the king, my lord. I am the dust beneath the feet of the king, my lord. My lord is the sun-god who rises day by day upon the lands, according to the decree of the sun-god his gracious father, and gives life by his glorious voice, and speaks (?) within his sanctuary (?), and makes all lands to dwell in strength, peace, and abundance,* and gives forth thunder in heaven like the god Rimmon [the god of the air], and all lands are consumed with terror because of his thunder.’”

Examples enough have now been given to show what unmeasured flattery was employed by the officers of the king of Egypt in addressing their lord and master. It seems to go far beyond that which was customary in other ancient Eastern courts or that offered to modern Oriental sovereigns. The kings of

* See Brit. Mus. Edition.

Assyria and Babylon imagined themselves indeed to be the especial favourites of the gods, and professed to perform all their deeds at the instigation and under the protection of Ashur and Bel; but they never supposed that they were themselves divine, or had worship paid to them.* The expressions used in speaking of the Pharaoh remind us of the adulation offered to some of the Roman emperors, not only after their death, but sometimes during their lifetime; we recall the phrase "*Dominus Deus*," the "Lord God," which was applied to Domitian. Martial says, in speaking of a performing elephant in the amphitheatre, that even the brute creation felt the divinity of Cæsar:—

"When the elephant kneels before thee, Cæsar, like a pious devotee, after his victory over the fierce bull, he is not acting at the bidding of his trainer, or because he has been taught to do this, but, believe me, because even he feels the presence of a god among us."

The body of the letters which follow the salutations consists of short sentences strung together without much connection, and with many vain repetitions. Sometimes a new paragraph or a new subject is introduced by the word *shanîtu*, which means "another thing," and is exactly equivalent to a similar phrase used in a similar manner in the letters of the native Egyptians in ancient times. The latter begin a new paragraph with the word *ki*, "another thing," or *ki zod*, "another word," in the following manner:—

"I have obeyed the message sent me by my lord, saying: 'Watch over the men who are under thy orders.'

* Except perhaps in the case of Ashur-nasir-pal, before whose image at Nimroud an altar was found.

"Another thing: The horses of my master are well; I give them their corn every day.

"Another thing: I have obeyed the message sent me by my lord, saying: 'Give the soldiers their rations, and also give rations to the *Aperiu* who bring the stone for the Temple of the Sun at Memphis.'"

And so during the rest of the letter.

The same form appears in some of the Tell el-Amarna tablets. For example, Ammunira, governor of Beyrout, after the salutations at the head of his epistle which have been given above, continues thus:—

"Another thing: I have heard the words of the king my lord, my sun-god, my gods, and the heart of thy servant, who is the dust of the feet of the king, my lord, my sun-god, my gods, rejoiced greatly when the breath of the king my lord, my sun-god, my gods, came forth to his servant, the dust of his feet.

"Another thing: When the king, my lord, my sun-god, sent to his servant, the dust of his feet, saying: 'Send out forces to join the soldiers of the king thy lord,' I obeyed these words with all my heart. And behold I sent all my horses, and all my chariots, and all that I had that was with the servant of the king my lord, to join the soldiers of the king my lord. May they shed the blood* of the king's enemies, and may the eyes of thy servant see the eyes of the king my lord!

"Another thing: See, O king my lord, my sun-god, my gods, let all that belongs to thy servant return to him. Behold, I am a servant of the king and the footstool of his feet. Behold, I will defend the city of the king my lord and its citadel, until my eyes see again the soldiers of the king my lord."

The "soldiers" frequently mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna tablets would seem to be the men that were sent by the king of Egypt to act as the garrison of the different towns under his rule.

The introduction of new paragraphs by the words

* Literally: May they drench the breasts of the king's enemies.

“Another thing” or “Another word” remained the usage of the Egyptian scribes down to a late period, for many Coptic letters of early Christian times retain it.

The employment of the Babylonian system of writing, and still more the use of the Babylonian language as the means of communication throughout Western Asia, shown in the letters found at Tell el-Amarna, proves the overpowering influence of Babylonian civilization in that part of the world during the age preceding the rule of the eighteenth dynasty in Egypt. None of the letters in question are written by native Babylonians or Assyrians, except those few that come from the kings of Babylon, Kallimma-Sin, and Buraburyash, and the single letter from Ashur-uballit, king of Assyria. The rest are either from Canaanite officials—who indeed spoke a Semitic dialect, but one quite distinct from the Babylonian—or they come from Mesopotamian princes, some of whom (for instance, the king of Mitâni) did not speak a Semitic language at all. Among the letters is one written in the language of Mitâni, which cannot at present be assigned to any known family of languages; even in this the cuneiform characters are employed.

If any proof were needed that the writers of these letters were not native Babylonians, it would be found in the frequent occurrence of glosses. In many passages of letters from Canaan we meet with a Babylonian word followed by an oblique stroke, after which comes the Canaanite word that has the same meaning. We are enabled to recognise the second term as

Canaanite, because it is generally identical with the Hebrew form so far as the latter can be expressed in the clumsy cuneiform system of writing; occasionally, however, these glosses seem to be Syriac or Arabic words. As an instance of such glosses, we may quote the following passage in a letter from Rip-Adda, governor of Byblus, to the king of Egypt:—

“There is no one who will deliver me out of the hand of my enemies; I am like a bird caught in a trap—*kilubu*.”

Here the word “trap” represents the Assyrian word employed by the scribe, who then adds the Canaanite gloss “*kilubu*,” which any Hebrew scholar will at once recognise as the word translated “basket” in the following passage of the Authorised Version:—

“Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit.

“And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit.”

But in a passage of Jeremiah the word is used exactly in the same way as in the letter of Rip-Adda; our version here translates it “cage”:—

“For among my people are found wicked men; they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.

“As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit.”

Kilubu, or *k'lûb*, was in fact a fowler's basket of wicker-work, in which he caught his defenceless prey. Such glosses as this in the letter of Rip-Adda are of great interest, on account of the light which they throw upon the language of Canaan at this period, not long before the exodus of the Israelites.

The question, of course, arises: How was it that the Babylonian script and language were so widely spread over Western Asia at this time? Had there been in the period preceding the rule of the eighteenth dynasty in Egypt a conquest of these countries as far as the shore of the Mediterranean by the Babylonians? There are several indications that such indeed had been the case, but the obscurity of that remote period of history is so dense that we must be satisfied for the present with slight hints and suggestions; more will probably be discovered before long. Among these hints is the statement of Manetho, the author of the history of Egypt in Greek, composed nearly three hundred years before Christ; much weight is attached to his words because he was a native of the country, and had access to reliable sources which are not known to us. Manetho tells us, in one of the fragments still preserved of his lost work, that in the time of the Hyksos, or shepherd-kings, who ruled Egypt for many centuries, and were finally driven out of the country by the first king of the eighteenth dynasty, about B.C. 1700, the Assyrians were predominant in Western Asia, and the Hyksos built fortresses on the eastern frontier of Egypt to guard themselves against an invasion of these powerful enemies. "Assyrians" was a name often indiscriminately given by Greek writers to the Babylonians as well as their northern neighbours, with whom they often formed one State. The cuneiform inscriptions also supply us with notices of very early invasions of Syria and Canaan by Babylonian princes. Sargon,

King of Agane, for instance, the father of Naram-Sin, to whom Nabonidus assigns the very remote date mentioned in another chapter, is said, in a mutilated astrological text, to have invaded Canaan, and to have advanced to the shores of the "upper sea," or Mediterranean:—

"Sargon marched to the western land, and conquered it; he obtained possession of the four regions [*i.e.*, North, South, East, and West]. . . .

"Sargon, following this omen, marched to . . . he had no equal; he spread his terror over the land; he crossed the western sea; he conquered the western land during three years, and united it together; he set up his image in the west; he transported the spoil over land and sea."

Again the Elamite prince, Kudurmapuk, who perhaps reigned over Babylonia shortly before the time of Abraham,* calls himself "lord of the west country:" that is to say, of Syria, for that was the name by which this country is always alluded to in the cuneiform inscriptions; the title appears on a brick which formed part of a temple built by this king, and runs as follows:—

"To the god Nannar his lord, Kudurmapuk, prince of Syria, son of Simtishilhak, when Nannar heard his prayer, built the temple of E-nun-makh for his own life and the life of his son Rim-Sin."

From these indications it would appear that from the most remote ages the powerful monarchs of the regions watered by the Tigris and Euphrates began to overrun from time to time the strip of fertile land along the coast of the Mediterranean which the natives called

* The invasion of Chedorlaomer and Amraphel related in Genesis xiv. is another instance of early Babylonian conquests in Syria.

Canaan, and the Greeks Phœnicia. This country became rich in very ancient times on account of the trade in which its inhabitants began so early to engage, and the booty of its cities excited the cupidity of Mesopotamian as well as Egyptian marauders. Moreover, the land of Canaan was the key to the valley of the Nile, and was therefore coveted by primitive generals and statesmen. The result of these repeated conquests of Canaan and the intermediate territories was that the Babylonian language and writing were introduced perforce among the inhabitants, just as Greek became the literary and diplomatic language of the same countries in later times, after the conquest of Alexander. It is, of course, to be presumed that the Phœnician alphabet had not yet been invented. The latter must have been borrowed from the Egyptians (if it was so borrowed, as De Rougé first held) during the centuries between B.C. 1400 and B.C. 900, for in the ninth century it is found in use.

The Babylonian supremacy in Western Asia must have been in abeyance at the time when the Hyksos kings were driven out of Egypt, and the latter power began to gain a foothold in Syria. This took place at the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty, when Ahmes I. took Sharhan, a city in the south of Canaan below Gaza, included after the exodus within the borders of the tribe of Simeon. The third king of the dynasty, Thothmes I., advanced to the northern parts of Ruten, or Syria, and subdued the native princes to his rule; he did not, however, require further proof of their sub-

mission than the payment of a considerable tribute of gold and silver, and other things; the native kings were allowed to retain their petty thrones, and even to make war upon one another, and agree upon treaties between themselves. It was during the rule of the eighteenth dynasty that horses were first brought into Egypt, where they were hitherto unknown, as part of the spoil or tribute of the princes of Ruten.

Besides the name of Ruten, the Egyptians gave to Canaan the designation of the "divine land," or the "holy land." The god Amen, for instance, is represented as saying to the Pharaoh:—

"I grant thee the tribute of the enemy, a load of silver, gold, lapis-lazuli, and all kinds of precious stones from the holy land."

The precious stones and metals were brought into Phœnicia and Palestine by the trade of the Tyrian and Sidonian merchants. Silver is mentioned before gold here, as in the Old Testament and in the cuneiform inscriptions, and is an illustration of the greater importance at that period of the former metal.

The greatest conqueror of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty was Thothmes III., who began to reign, perhaps, about B.C. 1600. In his days the cities of Syria rebelled against the Egyptian supremacy. The Pharaoh, therefore, undertook a series of expeditions into their territory. A certain Tanuni accompanied his sovereign on one of his campaigns as royal chronicler, and he has left in the inscriptions of his tomb an account of it:—

"I followed the gracious god Thothmes III.; I saw the victory of the king which he gained over all the lands: how he brought the

princes of Tahi (Phoenicia) alive as captives to the land of Egypt; how he took all their fortresses and destroyed their plantations. . . . I put down in writing the victories which he gained over all the lands as soon as they were accomplished."

Among the towns or districts conquered by Thothmes III. during this expedition we find mention of Helbon, or Chalybon, so famous for its wine, which alone was drunk in later times by the Persian kings, and which is spoken of by Ezekiel as one of the chief articles in which the Tyrian merchants traded. We meet with the names of Gaza, Zoar, Megiddo; of Tyre, of Arvad or Aradus, of Kadesh, of Carchemish—all familiar to us from scriptural or classical sources. The conquests of Thothmes extended as far as the Euphrates, and even the king of Assyria was forced to pay tribute to him, as well as the Hittites, the Canaanites, and many other nations. The conqueror inaugurated the custom of alliance by marriage with tributary princes by taking a daughter of a Syrian king as his wife. Thothmes III. enlarged the boundaries of the Egyptian empire to an extent which none of his predecessors or successors ever reached.

Amenophis II. made an expedition as far as the Euphrates, so that, apparently, in his time the Syrians remained subject to the supremacy of Egypt. Thothmes IV. is also said to have subdued his enemies as far as the regions of Mesopotamia. We have now reached the time of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, for the son and successor of Thothmes IV. was Amenophis III. According to Egyptian inscriptions, Amenophis III.

subdued various cities of Syria and Mesopotamia, and he also engaged in lion-hunting expeditions during his stay in those regions. He reigned thirty-four years, and was succeeded by his son, Amenophis IV., who introduced the heretical religion already alluded to. In the comparatively short reign of Amenophis IV. the Egyptian dominions in Western Asia seem to have begun to fall away from the supremacy of the Pharaoh.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS (*continued*).

LETTERS FROM MESOPOTAMIAN PRINCES TO THE KINGS OF EGYPT.

THE purposes for which the kings of Mesopotamian States sent letters to the Pharaoh were the following: to strengthen their alliance with the most powerful monarch of the time, whose tributary States touched upon their own borders; and to acquire some of the gold which was so abundant in the land of Egypt, and in exchange for which they despatched valuable treasures of other sorts. In order to cement their friendship with their mighty neighbour, they often sent him their daughters in marriage, and these unions were the more readily accepted or proposed by the Pharaoh because these princesses brought with them from the banks of the Euphrates an exceedingly handsome dowry. Thus the custom of intermarriage between the royal families of Egypt and of Western Asia had already begun. As we have seen, Thothmes III. obtained the hand of a Syrian princess; in later times Rameses II. had a Hittite wife; and doubtless there were many other cases of the same sort. The Tell el-Amarna tablets show us

that Thothmes IV. married a princess of Mitâni, and that his son, Amenophis III., received two wives from the royal family of that country, in addition to the Mesopotamian princess Thi, who was his "great wife," or queen. One of these ladies, who was sent as a wife to Amenophis III. at the end of his reign, was on his death married to his son and successor, Amenophis IV. Her name was Tâtum-Khipa, and she was the daughter of the king Tushratta. The kings of Babylon also sent the ladies of their family to be the wives of the Pharaoh; both the sister and the daughter of Kallimma-Sin were espoused to Amenophis III. On the other hand, Egyptian princesses were also sent in marriage to foreign princes; for, just as Solomon won the hand of the "daughter of Pharaoh," and the Edomite prince Hadad was rewarded with the hand of the sister of Tahpenes, the Egyptian queen, so the daughter of Amenophis IV. became the wife of a son of Burraburyash, king of Babylon. The alliances by marriage between the royal houses of Egypt and Mitâni are all alluded to in a much mutilated letter from King Tushratta to Amenophis IV., from which a few extracts may, perhaps, be given here:—

"[To Amenophis IV.] my son-in-law, whom I love, and who loves me: thus says Tushratta, the great king, the king of Mitâni, thy brother, thy father-in-law, who loves thee: 'It is well with me. May it be well with Thi [thy mother], with Tâtumkhipa, my daughter, thy wife; may it be well with thy children, thy great men, thy chariots, and thy horses . . . and all that thou hast!

"The father of Nimmuriya [*i.e.*, Thothmes IV., father of Amenophis III., and grandfather of Amenophis IV.] sent messengers to

Artatama, my grandfather, and asked for his daughter in marriage. My grandfather refused; he sent five times and six times, and my grandfather would not give her; he sent again, and under compulsion my grandfather gave her to him.

“‘The messenger of Nimmuriya [Amenophis III.], thy father, sent to Shutarna my father, and asked for my father’s daughter, my own sister, in marriage. . . . He sent five and six times, and under compulsion my father gave her to him. Nimmuriya also sent to me, and demanded my daughter in marriage . . . and I gave her to him.’ ”

The rest of the letter is too much mutilated to be fully understood or translated; but the fragments show that it was occupied with assurances of friendship to Amenophis IV., who had lately come to the throne, with expressions of grief over the death of Amenophis III.; with allusions to Thi, the queen-mother, who, as is usual in the East, held a position of great influence at the Court of her son, and with an enumeration of gifts sent to the king, his mother, and his wife.

The Princess Tâtum-khipa, Tushratta’s daughter, who, as we have just seen, was sent in marriage to Amenophis III., and then handed over to his son and successor, took with her a dowry which might well induce the Pharaoh to make similar alliances with the wealthy princes of Mesopotamia, who were thus eager to purchase his friendship. The list of objects of which it was composed covers two large clay tablets, now in the Berlin Museum; they are among the largest tablets that have ever been found, and are covered with very minute writing; even in their present mutilated condition they contain about 600 lines. The title of the document runs as follows:—

"This is the whole of the dowry which Tushratta, king of Mitanni, gave to Nimmuriya, king of Egypt, his brother and his son-in-law, when he sent Tâtum-khipa, his daughter, to the land of Egypt to Nimmuriya to be his wife; on that day he gave it."

The dowry is composed of an immense number of vessels, instruments, furniture, and other objects of gold and precious stone, such as lapis-lazuli, besides many of silver and copper and a few of iron. In addition to these, there are horses, and a chariot adorned with gold, and garments of variegated stuffs; many of the metallic objects were evidently proofs of the great skill of the Mesopotamian smiths and jewellers, for some of them were made partly of gold and partly of silver, or of bronze overlaid with the precious metals, and they were often encrusted with precious stones.

The Princess Tâtum-khipa, who took this dowry with her to Egypt, is also mentioned by name in a letter from her father to the Egyptian queen-mother Thi, who, in consequence of the lady's marriage with Amenophis IV., had now become her mother-in-law. The salutations at the head of this letter have been given in a former chapter. The body of the document is very much mutilated; it was occupied with assurances of friendship towards Egypt, and mentions certain gifts sent by Tushratta to the queen.

Tushratta had also in a former year sent greetings to his daughter in a letter to Amenophis III., written quite at the end of the latter monarch's reign; the date is proved by a docket in Egyptian hieratic characters, painted with black ink at the end of the letter by the

keeper of the Pharaoh's archives. The salutations at the head of this letter have already been quoted in the preceding chapter as an instance of the epistolary forms in use at this period. They are succeeded by the following paragraphs :—

“Thus says the goddess Ishtar, of the city of Ninâ, the lady of the whole world : ‘I will go into the land of Egypt, the land that I love ; I will proceed thither.’ Behold, now, I will send her, and she shall go.

“Behold, in the time of my father, the goddess Ishtar, the Lady, went into that land, and, as formerly she dwelt there and he worshipped her, so now let my brother honour her ten times more than before. Let my brother honour her with joy ; and then let him send her back and let her return.

“May Ishtar, the lady of heaven, guard my brother and me a hundred years, and may she give great joy to both of us, if we do what is right.

“The goddess Ishtar has been up to me ; but to my brother she has not been.”

It appears from this letter that the intercourse of Egypt with Western Asia was resulting in the introduction of the worship of the latter region into the valley of the Nile. This, in fact, took place to such an extent that Amenophis IV., the successor of the king to whom this epistle is addressed, finally apostatized, as we have seen in the last chapter, from the religion of his forefathers. A curious episode in the religious history of Egypt may be compared with the sending of the image of Ishtar, or Ashtoreth, mentioned above ; it is the introduction of the worship of the Semitic Ashtoreth into the island of Pharos, mentioned by several ancient writers ; she was known subsequently as the Pharian

Isis, since her worship was assimilated to that of the kindred Egyptian goddess. The rites of Mesopotamia prescribed the moving of the images of the gods from place to place; religious processions appear to have been frequent in Babylonia and Assyria, and their stoppage by Nabonidus was imputed to him by the priests as a grievous crime, which, indeed, probably led to his overthrow.

We have seen that, besides his daughter, Tushratta's sister had also been sent in marriage to the king of Egypt. Her name was Gilu-khipa, and she was the daughter of the king Shutarna, Tushratta's father. The discovery of her name in the Tell el-Amarna tablets* was an interesting confirmation of an Egyptian inscription in hieroglyphics upon a scarabæus belonging to the reign of Amenophis III., which states that—

“Kirgipa, the daughter of Shutarna, prince of Mesopotamia, was brought to His Majesty, together with three hundred and seventeen of the ladies of her train.”

The name Gilu-khipa appears as Kirgipa in Egyptian, because that language did not contain the letter *l*, but represented it by *r*. This princess is mentioned by her brother Tushratta in the following letter to Amenophis III. :—

“To Nipmuariya, king of Egypt, my brother, thus says Tushratta, king of Mitāni, thy brother: ‘I am well; mayest thou be well, may Gilu-khipa, my sister, be well, may thy palace, thy wives, thy children, thy great men, thy army, thy horses, thy chariots, thy lands be well indeed !

* See article by the author in “*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*” (1890), p. 113.

“‘When I took my seat upon the throne of my father, I was young, and Pirkhi had done evil * things to my land, and had slain his lord ; but on account of this, I, and those who were friendly with me, for good fortune did not abandon me, smote our enemies on account of the evil things they had done in my land, and I slew the men that had slain my brother Artashumara, every one of them.

“‘Because thou wast friendly with my father, on account of that, I send and tell thee this news. When my brother hears it, he will be glad. My father loved thee, and thou didst love my father. . . .

“‘[The Hittites made war upon me, but] . . . when the enemy invaded my land, the god Rimmon, my lord, gave them into my hand, and I slew them. There was not one left to return to his own country.

“‘Behold, I send to thee out of the spoil of the Hittites a chariot and a pair of horses, one slave-boy, and one slave-girl.

“‘As a gift to my brother, I send five chariots and five pairs of horses.

“‘As a gift to Gilu-khipa, my sister, I send a pair of gold bracelets, a pair of gold earrings, a golden bowl, and one vase of precious stone full of precious ointment.

“‘Behold, I have sent Giliya, my messenger, and Tanip-ipri. Let my brother send them back speedily, and let them bring back news speedily. When I hear of the gifts of my brother may I rejoice.

“‘Let my brother ask for good things from me, and let my brother send his messengers, and when they receive my brother's gifts I shall hear of it.’”

We have seen that Amenophis III. was also allied by marriage with the royal family of Babylon ; and among the Tell el-Amarna tablets is actually a letter from the Pharaoh himself to Kallimma-Sin, king of Babylon, in the Babylonian language, referring to the Babylonian wife whom he had already married, and to another whose hand he demands.

* This word is derived from a preposition meaning before, against ; and it has the signification of contrary, hostile.

It would seem from this that a Babylonian scribe was kept at the Egyptian court at this period in order to interpret the despatches received from Western Asia, and to answer them in the language that was then the general medium of international communication in that region. It will be seen that the epistolary forms of Babylon are preserved. The king of Babylon, who was sufficiently powerful in these days of Egyptian preponderance to oblige even the Pharaoh to address him with deference, and almost in an apologetic tone, had refused to send his daughter to Egypt until he was assured of the welfare of his sister, who was already an inmate of the house of Pharaoh. The following is the first part of the letter of Amenophis :—

“To Kallimma-Sin, king of the land of Karduniyash, my brother, thus says Nipmuariya, the great king, the king of the land of Egypt, thy brother : ‘It is well with me ; may it be well, indeed, with thee, with thy household, thy wives, thy children, thy great men, thy horses, thy chariots, and thy country !’

“Behold, I have heard the word which thou hast sent to me, saying thus : ‘Behold, thou seekest my daughter in marriage. But my sister whom my father gave thee has been long with thee, and no one has seen her to know whether she be alive or dead.’ These are thy words, which thou hast sent me on thy tablet. If thou wilt send a priest who knows thy sister, and who has spoken with her and held intercourse with her, then let him speak with her. The men whom thou hast sent are simply messengers. . . .

“When thou sentest word to me thus : ‘Thou didst speak to my messengers, when thy wives were assembled and stood before thee, saying thus : “See your mistress, who stands before you” ; and my messengers did not know whether she be my sister who is with thee or not.’

“Behold, thou didst send word to me thus : ‘My messengers did

not know her.' Whom canst thou mention that can know her? Why hast thou not sent a priest who can tell thee the truth that thy sister is well, and thou shalt tell him to enter and see her house, and her favour with the king?" . . .

In a letter subsequently received by Amenophis III., the king of Babylon gives his consent to the marriage of his daughter with the Pharaoh. He says:—

"As for Sukhartu, my daughter, whom thou didst send to ask in marriage, . . . send messengers and let them take her."

After the death of Kallimma-Sin, a king named Karaindash sat upon the throne of Babylon; he is thus named in the inscription upon a brick which once formed part of a temple that he built:—

"To the goddess Nana, the lady of E-anna, his lady, has Karaindash, the mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Shumir and Accad, king of the Kassites, king of Karduniyash, built the temple at E-anna."

Karaindash was succeeded by Kurigalzu, who, in his turn, was followed by Burnaburyash, or Burraburyash, in the time of Amenophis IV. of Egypt. The latter received several letters from Burraburyash, which are to be found among the Tell el-Amarna tablets; but before quoting them, let us see what previous knowledge we possessed of this king. He is mentioned in the following terms on a clay tablet which contains a record of certain treaties and wars between Babylonia and Assyria in early times; the document begins thus:—

"Karaindash, king of Babylon, and Ashur-bil-nishishu, king of Assyria, made treaties with one another, and tendered an oath to one another with regard to this territory.

"Busur-ashur, king of Assyria, and Burnaburyash, king of Karduniyash, treated of this territory and defined the boundaries.

"In the time of Ashur-uballit, king of Assyria, the Kassites fell away from Karakhardash, king of Karduniyash, son of Muballit-sirua, daughter of Ashur-uballit, and killed him; and they raised Nazibugash, the son of nobody, to be king over them.

"[Ashur-uballit] marched to the land of Karduniyash to avenge Karakhardash; he killed Nazibugash, king of Karduniyash, and placed the young Kurigalzu, son of Burnaburyash, to reign upon the throne of his father."

We also possess bricks from a temple restored by Burraburyash, exhibiting the following stamp:—

"To the sun-god, the great lord of heaven and earth, the high judge of the Anunnaki, who gives life to Larsa, has Burnaburyash, the mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Shumir and Accad, built and restored the temple . . . which for many ages had fallen to decay."

Among the many works of restoration undertaken by the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, in the sixth century before Christ, this monarch repaired, as he tells us, certain buildings erected or restored by Burraburyash. Allusion, however, has been made to this in a former chapter, and some of the passages have been quoted, so that they need not be repeated here. Let us proceed to enquire in what terms Burraburyash sought to assure his alliance with the king of Egypt; the following is one of the letters that he addressed to Amenophis IV.:—

[After salutations.]

"When my father and thy father spoke good words with one another they sent fair gifts to one another. Did they not also make fair demands of one another? Now my brother has sent me two manehs of gold as a gift. Now, send me much gold, as much as thy father, or send me even half as much as thy father. Why hast thou

sent two manehs of gold? There is much work now in the temple, and I have undertaken much to carry it out. Send me much gold; and whatever thou desirest in my land, send me word and let them take it to thee.

“In the time of Kurigalzu, my father, all the Canaanites sent to him, saying thus: ‘We go to Kannishat to rebel [against Pharaoh]; let us make an alliance with thee.’ My father sent this message to them, saying thus: ‘Leave speaking with me to incite me [against Pharaoh]. If you make war upon the king of Egypt, my brother, and make an alliance with another, shall I not march against you, and ravage your country?’ . . . My father would not listen to them for the sake of thy father. Now the Assyrians are seeking my favour; have I not sent word to thee of what they have said? Why have they invaded thy territory? If thou remainest friendly with me, they will do thee no harm. . . .

“For a gift to thee, I send three manehs of lapis-lazuli, and five pairs of horses, with five wooden chariots.”

In another letter Buraburyash alludes to the daughter of Pharaoh, who had become the wife of his son. But the object of the Mesopotamian princes in writing to one another was not merely political, or to strengthen themselves against the attacks of enemies by seeking the friendship of Pharaoh, and by giving him their daughters in marriage. They had also commercial objects in view. In these early days the kings were the great merchants. In the imperfectly organized condition of society in which the States of Western Asia and of the Valley of the Nile, although at the head of the civilization of their time, found themselves in the sixteenth century before Christ, the monarch united all the chief functions of the State in his own person, and took the lead in all manifestations of human activity. He was often high priest, general of the army, chief

architect, and also he was the chief merchant of the State, and into his hands the wealth of the country was collected. There are many proofs of this in ancient times. The kings of Tyre and Sidon are represented to us as merchant-princes, and even as late as the sixth century before Christ Ezekiel says to the prince of Tyre:—

“With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures.

“By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches.”

The Jewish kings monopolised the trade in balsam and dates, and the Arabian princes that in foreign perfumes; the Lydian kings were the first merchants of their country; the tyrant of Corinth was a slave-dealer. As for the king of Egypt, we are told that his servants who went abroad to promote his gains and carry on his trade were the only Egyptians who were allowed without censure to travel away from their own country; such was the horror that the inhabitants of the Valley of the Nile had of foreign customs and religions, and such was their dread of contamination from the latter. But the most vivid picture we possess of the royal merchants of antiquity is the account of the trade between Hiram of Tyre and King Solomon, and of their united commercial enterprises on the shores of the Mediterranean and in the Red Sea. Perhaps we may be allowed to reproduce it here:—

“Hiram, the king of Tyre, had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold according to all his desire;

then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

“And Hiram sent to the king six score talents of gold.

“And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom:

“And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

“And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon.

“And the navy also of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees and precious stones.

“Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold.

“Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

“For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory and apes, and peacocks.

“So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

“And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.

“And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

“And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen, and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.

“And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale for abundance.

“And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn : the king’s merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

“And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty : and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.”

It will be noticed that the servants of Solomon who carried out his commercial transactions are called the “king’s merchants.” Similar messengers, or “king’s merchants,” are mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna tablets. The king of Alashiya sends the following letter to Amenophis III. :—

[After salutations.]

“My brother, send back my messenger quickly and safely, and let me hear of thy good health. My brother, send back this man, who is my merchant, safely and quickly. Have not my merchant and my ship brought thy wares (?) with them?”

East Africa was the great gold country of ancient times. It was on the east coast of Africa, without doubt, that Ophir was situated. Solomon sent directly to this region for much of the gold that was brought to him, but in the time of Amenophis III. and his son, gold reached the markets of Western Asia through Egypt, the dominions of which extended far to the south of its own boundaries. So we find the Mesopotamian princes especially requesting the Pharaoh to send them gold in return for the copper, or perfumes, or other wares which they sent to him. The following is a letter to Amenophis III. from Tushratta, king of Mitâni, who, as we have already seen, was closely allied by various marriages with the royal family of Egypt:—

[After salutations.]

“As for thy ancestors, they were most friendly with my ancestors, and thou, also, wast exceedingly friendly with my father. Now, if thou and I shall be friendly together, thou shalt be multiplied ten times more than thy father. May the gods that we love favour this alliance—namely : Rimmon, my lord, and Amen ! May they answer our prayers for ever, as at the present time !

“Since my brother has sent Mani, his messenger, saying thus : ‘My brother, give me thy daughter in marriage, to be the lady of the land of Egypt,’ let not my brother’s heart be sick ; did I not say this formerly ? As my brother desired, I showed her to Mani, and he saw her ; and when he saw her, he admired her greatly. In peace shall they take her to the land of my brother ; and may Ishtar and Amen fashion her according to the heart of my brother !

“Giliya, my messenger, repeated to me my brother’s words, and when I heard them they were good, and I rejoiced greatly, saying thus : ‘Bring this to pass between us, that we may be friendly with one another.’ Behold, according to these words we will be friendly with one another for ever.

“When I sent to my brother and said thus : ‘I and my brother will be exceedingly friendly with one another,’ I also said thus : ‘My brother shall return to me ten times more than to my father.’

“So I asked much gold of my brother, saying thus : ‘Multiply it to me more than to my father.’ Let my brother multiply it to me. Thou didst send much gold to my father ; thou didst send him a great quantity of gold and great masses of gold : cakes of gold—as if it were copper—shalt thou send to me.

“I send my messenger, Giliya, to my brother, and I ask him thus : ‘Let my brother return to me ten times more than he did to my father, and let him send me much unworked gold.’ Thus I say to my brother : ‘Thy vessels which my grandfather made I will make,’ . . . and so also I say : ‘The gold that my brother sends let him send for the dowry [of my daughter, whom he is about to marry].’

“Behold, now, I send to my brother, and let my brother multiply friendship to me more than to my father. Behold, I ask

gold of my brother, and the gold I ask of my brother I have been twice to ask; first, for the . . . and secondly, for the dowry.

"Let my brother send me much unworked gold, and let my brother send me more gold than he did to my father. In my brother's land gold is multiplied like dust. May the gods grant that gold may be multiplied in my brother's land as now, and ten times more than now! Let not the gold that I ask for make the heart of my brother sick; let me not make the heart of my brother sick. Let my brother send me exceedingly large quantities of unworked gold, and whatever my brother desires for his house let him send and take it; and I will give my brother whatever gift he desires.

"This land is my brother's land, and this house is my brother's house.

"Behold, I have sent my messenger Giliya to my brother; let not my brother despise him. Let him dismiss him quickly and let him go. When I hear of my brother's gift I shall rejoice greatly; I shall value my brother's gift for ever. These words which we send to one another, may the god Rimmon, my lord, and Amen, allow . . . and, as now, may they fashion them according to their own will! As now we love one another, so for ever may we love one another!"

The letter concludes with an enumeration of gifts sent by Tushratta to Amenophis III., including several objects of gold inlaid with lapis-lazuli and other precious stones, ten pairs of horses, ten chariots with all their fittings, and thirteen slave-girls.

It is somewhat remarkable to find that after these urgent requests for gold from the Pharaoh, Tushratta sent such a treasure of gold vessels and ornaments with his daughter, whom, as he says in this letter, he married to Amenophis III. The dowry of Tushratta's daughter has already been described above. But the explanation is given in this letter itself: part of the unworked gold obtained by Tushratta from Egypt was actually sent

back as his daughter's dowry in the form of vessels and furniture of elaborate workmanship, and adorned with jewels. It must be supposed that Tushratta kept a sufficient quantity of the gold for himself, and if he returned much of it with his daughter it was because he was anxious to purchase peace at any price by preserving friendship with the all-powerful Pharaoh.

Not only the king of Mitâni, but other princes of Western Asia send demands for gold to the land of Egypt, where "gold is as dust." The latter phrase resembles expressions which occur in the Bible more than once, when the amassing of great treasures by wealthy princes is spoken of. Zechariah says:—

"Tyre did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets."

It is said of Solomon, in the passage quoted above:—

"And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones."

On account of the treasures of gold which came to Egypt from the more southern regions of Africa, we find the king of Assyria sending for a quantity of the precious metal in a letter to Amenophis IV., inscribed on one of the Tell el-Amarna tablets:—

[After salutations.]

"When I saw thy messengers I rejoiced greatly. I sent for thy messengers to come into my presence.

"I send as a gift for thee a chariot . . . and two white horses . . . one chariot, and a seal of lapis-lazuli.

"Gold is like dust in thy country.

"My father, Ashur-nadin-akhi, sent messengers to Egypt, and they sent him twenty talents of gold.

"If thou art favourably disposed towards me, send and let thy messengers take whatever thou desirest."

In a letter quoted above, from Burraburyash, king of Babylon, to Amenophis IV., in which the writer seeks to confirm his alliance with the Egyptian monarch, there is a similar request for gold, which was to be sent in exchange for other wares. Apparently, Amenophis IV. was not active in his commercial transactions, to use a modern term, with Babylonia, for in the following letter we find Burraburyash complaining that the precious metal which he desired for the building of a temple was not arrived in sufficient quantities. The writer says:—

[After salutations.]

"From the time of Karaindash, and from the time when thy father's messengers came before my father until now, they have been friendly. Now, I and thou—we will be friendly.

"Thy messengers have come hither three times, but they have not brought any good gift; and therefore I have not sent thee any good gift. I have lost nothing, and I have deprived thee of nothing (?).

"Thy messenger whom thou hast sent has not paid the full amount of the twenty manehs of gold."

In another letter Burraburyash says:—

"Send thy messengers and let them take whatever thou desirest from my country; and I will send my messengers and let them take what I desire from thy country."

We can imagine that Solomon sent letters similar to these to Hiram and the other princes with whom he

exchanged the wares of his own country for the products of theirs.

The predecessor of Burraburyash, Kallimma-Sin, some of whose letters to Amenophis III. are quoted above, also sent demands for gold to Egypt, and with the same urgency, on account of building operations which he had undertaken; when the work is finished he will not require gold, nor would he accept even the immense sum of 3,000 talents; unless the gold arrives at once he will not send his daughter in marriage to the Pharaoh.

Another prince who carried on commercial transactions with the Egyptian monarch was the king of Alashiya. It is difficult to conjecture where this country lay; it must have had a sea-board, because the king sent his messengers in ships to Egypt; and as it is mentioned in the Egyptian inscriptions in connection with Mesopotamia and Syria, it would seem to have touched upon those regions. One thing seems certain: and that is that Alashiya produced copper in large quantities, for this is the commodity that the king of that country sends to Egypt in exchange for other wares. It seems that copper was found in ancient days in the Lebanon mountains, in Cilicia, in the kingdom of Israel, and in the country of Edom; although by far the best in quality came from Cyprus. There was no copper in Egypt, so that, without doubt, the West Asiatic merchants could command a high price for this metal. It is remarkable, however, that the king of Alashiya asks for silver, not gold; yet all

the silver in Egypt must have come through foreign trade. The following is the most complete of his letters :—

“To the king of Egypt, my brother, thus says the king of the land of Alashiya, thy brother: ‘It is well indeed with me, with my household, my wives, my children, my great men, my horses, my chariots, and my country. May it be well indeed with my brother, with thy household, thy wives, thy children, thy great men, thy horses, thy chariots, and thy country.

“Behold, my brother, I have sent my messenger, in company with thy messenger, to the land of Egypt.

“Behold, I have sent thee five hundred weight of copper; as a gift to my brother I have sent them. My brother, lay it not to heart that there is little copper in thy country; for the hand of the god Nergal [the deity of Hades] slew all the men in my country, and there were no workers in copper; but, my brother, lay it not to heart.

“Send thy messenger back with my messenger speedily, and whatever copper thou desirest, my brother, I will send to thee.

“My brother, do thou send me much silver; give me, my brother, the silver of the gods, and I will send thee in return whatever thou desirest.

“Another thing: give me, my brother, the oxen which my messenger will ask for, and the precious ointments; send me two jars of . . . , my brother, and send me one of the bird-breeders (?).

“Another thing: a man of the land of Alashiya has died in the land of Egypt, and his goods are still in thy country, but his wife and children are with me. My brother, give the goods of the natives of Alashiya into the hand of my messenger.

“My brother, lay it not to heart that thy messenger has dwelt for three years in my land, because the hand of Nergal has lain upon my land, and in my own house my wife brought forth a son who is now dead, O my brother.

“Send thy messenger in company with my messenger under guard every month. I have sent a gift to my brother.

“Another thing: My brother, send the silver which I ask of

thee in great quantities, and send the goods which I ask of thee ; and I have performed all the requests of my brother, and I will perform all the requests that my brother shall make of me.

“‘Make no alliance with the king of the Hittites or with the king of Shinar. Whatever gifts they have sent to me, I return twofold to thee.

“‘Thy messenger came to me by name, and my messenger goes to thee by name.’”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS (*continued*).

CANAAN BEFORE THE EXODUS.

WHEN the Egyptian kings of the eighteenth dynasty invaded the country which lies along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, and which the natives called Canaan and the Greeks Phœnicia, they found it divided into a number of small States, each governed by an independent prince. It was the policy of the Pharaohs to leave the country under the same conditions of government, only requiring the regular payment of tribute, and at a later time placing native Canaanites upon whom they could rely as their own officers in the cities, side by side with the hereditary prince. This is the political state of Canaan shown in the Tell el-Amarna tablets, only we here see the Egyptian supremacy on the decline. The native princes are beginning to throw off their allegiance to the Pharaoh. The officers of the king of Egypt are attacked or deserted; they attempt to maintain his authority with the help of the soldiers whom he sends them; but in many cases they are shut up and besieged in certain cities until they are forced to yield.

In the letters from the Egyptian officials which

reveal to us this state of affairs, the name of the Pharaoh under whose reign they took place is not generally stated, but it was, without doubt, Amenophis IV., whom Akizzi addresses by name, and whose power is known to have been much weakened by religious dissensions; moreover, it was on the site of his capital that all this body of correspondence was found. Nevertheless, one of the letters of Buraburyash, quoted in the last chapter, shows us that the Canaanites had already meditated rebellion in the time of Amenophis III., and had actually asked for the alliance and support of the king of Babylon, who, however, had loyally refused to listen to the treacherous proposal.

The name of Canaan had never been found in the cuneiform inscriptions until the discovery of the Tell el-Amarna tablets. It occurs here, however, in the two forms, *mat Kinákhi* and *mat Kinakhna*, which correspond to the native forms *Kná'* and *Kna'an*, or Canaan. We know, of course, from many passages in the Bible, that the sea-coast from Sidon to the boundary of Egypt, including a strip of inland territory, was known as the land of Canaan before the invasion of Joshua. We also learn from Phœnician inscriptions and from ancient authors that the natives of Tyre and Sidon, and the rest of this country which was not included in the dominions of Israel, continued to name their territory *Kná'*, or Canaan, until comparatively late times; and Saint Augustine says that even the rustics of North Africa, in his own day, who represented the ancient colony from Tyre, if they were asked of what nationality they were,

would answer "Canaanites." When the letters found at Tell el-Amarna were written, the name of Canaan was still applied to the whole region, including that part which afterwards formed the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The following appears to be a letter of commendation which the servant or "merchant" of some Mesopotamian prince took with him to serve as a passport on his way through Canaan to Egypt. It is addressed to any of the native princes tributary to the Pharaoh through whose petty dominions the envoy might have to journey:—

"To the kings of the land of Canaan (*Kindakhna*), the servants of my brother, thus says the king. . . : 'Behold I send Akiya, my messenger, to the king of Egypt, my brother. . . . Let no one hinder him. Send him on safely to the land of Egypt. . . . Let no violence be done to him.'"

Such a passport was necessary to ensure the protection of the envoys and merchants of various kings, who were obliged to pass through Canaan on their way into Egypt. The dangers which were incurred during these journeys through that unsettled and turbulent country are illustrated by the fate which befell the merchants of King Burraburyash of Babylon, related in the following letter from that monarch to Amenophis IV.:—

[After salutations.]

"I and my brother, we have spoken good things to one another. This is what we said: 'As our fathers were friendly with one another, so let us be friendly.'

"Now, my merchants who were conveying their wares (?) to my brother have met with their death. When they were carrying merchandise for my brother, and had come to the city of Khinnatuni, in

the land of Canaan, Shum-Adda, the son of Malumme, and Shutadna, the son of Sharâtum of the city of Accho [the modern Acre], sent their men and slew my merchants and seized their silver.

“The land of Canaan is thy land, therefore call those kings to account since I have suffered violence in their land, and make them restore the money that they have stolen, and slay the men who slew my servants. . . . If thou dost not slay those men . . . they will slay thy messengers, and no messenger will be able to pass (?) between us. . . . Shum-Adda cut off the feet of my servant and struck off his hands, and the other, Shutadna of Accho, cut off (?) his head. . . .”

The investiture of such petty princes as those of Canaan by the Egyptian kings is alluded to in the following passage:—

“Manakhbiya [Thothmes IV., father of Amenophis III.], appointed . . . king of the land of Nukhashi, and poured oil upon his head.”

Besides the name of Canaan, we find another commonly applied to the country in the Tell el-Amarna tablets. This is the term “land of Amûri,” or land of the Amorites, and is the same name which the prophet Amos uses where he says:—

“I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorite.”

This name appears in Egyptian as the land of *Amaure*. It is the designation generally given in the cuneiform inscriptions, both those of earlier and those of later date than the Tell el-Amarna tablets, to the land lying along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and by a transference of meaning signifies the west generally; the west wind is called the wind of *Amûru*.

Among the cities of Canaan mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna tablets we find : Tyre, Sidon, Beyrout, Byblus, or Gebal, Acre, Aradus, or Arvad, Gaza, Joppa, Simyra, or Zemar, Gezer, Jerusalem, and many others ; Damascus also appears.

The officer of the Egyptian government in Tyre writes to the Pharaoh in sore distress ; he is attacked by the enemies of the Egyptian power on all sides, and unless the king sends him men and supplies he will not be able to hold out. The officer is a native Canaanite, and his name is *Abi-milki*, or Abimelech, and means "the king is my father." It will be remembered that the name of the "cunning workman" sent to Solomon by King Hiram of Tyre was named Hiram-abi, or "Hiram is my father." We learn from the letters of Abi-milki that Tyre was already a city upon an island, and we hear no mention of the other Tyre upon the mainland, which the Greeks called Palaetyrus, and which was believed to be the more ancient part of the city. The great merchant city of Phœnicia was already, in the time of the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt, seated in "the midst of the seas,"* and "inhabited by seafaring men." In consequence of her position, she suffered severely in time of war from the want of water and other supplies, which were habitually brought over from the mainland in boats. This operation is actually mentioned in an Egyptian papyrus, which contains notes of the travels of an officer of the Pharaoh through part of

* Ezekiel xxvi. 17 ; xxvii. 4 ; xxviii. 2.

Syria, not more than a century, perhaps, later than the letters of Abi-milki :—

“They [*i.e.*, such and such places] are near another city in the sea, the name of which is Tyre, the port. Water is brought to it in boats ; it is richer in fish than in sand.”

That part of Tyre which lay on the mainland was richly provided with water from wells and aqueducts ; the supply from the latter was cut off by the king of Assyria, who besieged the place in the eighth century before Christ. The reason for which the city on the island was founded was that there were here two good harbours, whereas Palaetyrus had no harbour, although well situated in other respects. For the convenience of navigation and trade, therefore, the two bare rocks which lay at a short distance from the shore were covered with soil, and buildings were erected upon them ; and it was from these rocks that the name Tyre, or the Rock, was derived. Of the two harbours, one was called the Sidonian, because it looked north ; and the other the Egyptian, because it received the trading vessels from the mouth of the Nile. As for the date of the foundation of Tyre, it must remain uncertain for the present. Herodotus, however, was informed by the Tyrian priests that their city was first built two thousand three hundred years before the date of his visit : that is to say, about B.C. 2750. The city was ancient in the time of Abi-milki. We do not hear anything in the Tell el-Amarna tablets about the trade of Tyre ; we do not know how far she already anticipated the picture drawn by the prophet Ezekiel of her varied commerce.

But as we hear of her ships, which she was the first to build for the purposes of her trade, we may conclude that the merchants of Tyre were already known in many ports of the Mediterranean, where they exchanged the wares of Egypt and Assyria, as well as those of their own country, for the rough produce of less civilized nations.

The appearance of the island city excited the admiration of many lovers of the picturesque in later and more cultivated days:—

“Never have I seen so much beauty; for the lofty trees murmur beside the waves, and the forest nymph bends down to listen to the song of the sea nymph, floating at her feet; while the soft mid-day breeze blows from Lebanon on the Tyrian waters, and on the sea-girt fields, and with the same breath ripens the fruits, and drives the ships across the waves, at once cooling the labourer’s brow, and filling the sails of the mariner.

“O, city, famous throughout the world, the type of earth, the image of heaven, thou bearest the triangular sword-belt of thy fellow the sea.

“Greatly Dionysus rejoiced when he saw the city which the ocean-god has bound with the liquid girdle of the waves. In shape she was like the crescent moon. As he looked it seemed a double wonder, since Tyre lies in the sea and is bound by the waves, and yet belongs to the land. She seemed like a maiden floating motionless, half submerged in the waters.”*

After the siege of Alexander the Great, Tyre ceased to be an island, for the great causeway which he constructed united her with the coast. The city now resembled a ship which was moored near to the shore, and had put out a gangway for the landing of the

* Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, xl. 311 ff.

passengers.* She afforded a new spectacle: that of a city in the midst of the sea and at the same time of an island on shore.† Let us see in what terms Abimilki wrote to the Egyptian king for help, when the enemies of the Pharaoh shut him up on the rock of Tyre:—

[After salutations.]

“I am guarding the city of the king, which he entrusted to my charge, with all my might. My desire is to go and see the face of the king, my lord, but I cannot escape from the hand of Zimrida, the Sidonian. The king has heard that he has become great, and has made war upon me. Let the king give me men to defend the city of the king, my lord. Let me enter into the presence of the king, my lord, to see his face and obtain his favour. . . . Let the king ask the officer of his Gate whether I do not serve the king, my lord.

“We have no water and we have no wood. Behold I send Illumilki, my messenger, into the presence of the king, my lord, and I have given him five talents of copper. . . .

“The king sent to me, saying: ‘Send word to me of what thou hearest from the land of Canaan.’ (I say therefore that) the king of the land of Dananu is dead, and his brother is become king after him, and his land is at peace. Let the king know that half of the city of Elgarit is burnt with fire. . . . There are no soldiers from the land of the Hittites. Etagamapairi of Kadesh, and Aziru have made war upon Namyawiza. . . . Zimrida has collected ships and men from the cities.”

The following letter depicts the same state of distress:—

[After salutations.]

“The king said to his servant: ‘[Command] Shalmayati, my servant, to give water that you may drink.’ But they did not do as the king commanded; they did not give it.

* Chariton, vii.

† Achilles Tatius, ii.

"Let the king counsel his servant Shalmayati to give water, that he may save his own life.

"Another thing: O, my lord the king, we have no wood; we have no water. . . .

"Let the king command his servant, and the city of Tyre, the city of Shalmayati; and whatever comes forth from the mouth of the king to his servant, I will perform."

It thus appears that Abi-Milki soon had cause to regret his appointment as the representative of the king of Egypt, over which he showed so much joy at the beginning. It is curious to compare with the letters that have just been quoted one which he wrote when he was first placed as "Egyptian Resident" in Tyre:—

[After salutations.]

"Thus says the servant to his lord: 'Behold, I have heard the messenger who brought the gracious message of the king, and who came to his servant, and the favourable words which came out of the mouth of the king, my lord, to his servant when he spoke his words. If the messenger of the king, my lord, had not come he would not have spoken the words; the mouth of my enemies would have spoken. See, now, behold the words of the king have come forth upon me. Then I rejoiced greatly.

"Behold I have heard the favourable messenger who came from my lord, and all the world fears before the face of my lord. Behold, I have heard the gracious words and the favourable messenger who came to me.' Behold, the king, my lord, said: 'Stand before the face of the great men'; and the servant said to his lord: 'Yea, yea.'

"If a man does not obey the words of the king his lord, his city perishes; his house perishes; his name is lost for ever in his country. But if the servant obeys the voice of his lord, his city remains; his house continues, and his name lasts for ever."

Another Canaanite officer of the Egyptian king, who is represented by a large number of letters among the Tell el-Amarna tablets, was Rip-Adda of Byblus. This faithful servant of the Pharaoh was attacked and besieged by his enemies, who shut him up in his city like "a bird in a trap." The leaders of the faction opposed to Rip-Adda were a certain Abd-Ashirta and his son Aziru. Yet, strange to say, Abd-Ashirta himself sent letters to the king of Egypt, professing loyalty to the Egyptian supremacy:—

"To the king, my lord, thus says Abd-Ashirta, the servant of the king: 'At the feet of the king, my lord, I bow seven times.'

"Let the king learn that the hostility against me is strong. May I receive favour in the sight of the king, and may he send a great man to defend me.

"Another thing: The king sent a message to his servant, and I have obeyed all the words of the king.

"Behold, I have sent ten female slaves."

Byblus was one of the most ancient of the primeval cities on the Phœnician coast; some, indeed, said that she was the most ancient of all. She possessed a famous image of the goddess Beltis, whose blessing Rip-Adda in all his letters invokes upon the head of the Pharaoh. The goddess is also mentioned in a Phœnician inscription upon a stela of the sixth or fifth century before Christ, which runs as follows:—

"I am Jehavmelech, king of Byblus, son of Jaharbaal, grandson of Adonimelech, king of Byblus, whom my Lady the goddess Beltis of Byblus set as king over Byblus. I invoke my Lady, Beltis of Byblus, because [she hears my voice]. I have made for my Lady,

Beltis of Byblus, this brazen altar, in this [temple], and this golden ornament and the golden [uraeus in the middle of the stone] over this golden ornament; and this porch, and its columns, and their capitals, and the roof, I, Jehavmelech, king of Byblus, have made for my Lady, Beltis of Byblus, because whenever I have invoked my Lady, Beltis of Byblus, she has heard my voice and conferred favours upon me. May Beltis of Byblus bless Jehavmelech, king of Byblus, and give him life, and lengthen his days and his years in Byblus, because he is a righteous king; and may Beltis of Byblus give him grace before the gods and before the people of this land, and the favour of the people of strange lands for ever. Every prince and every man who shall change this altar, or this golden ornament, or this porch, I, Jehavmelech, set my face against him. . . . May the goddess Beltis of Byblus destroy that man and his seed."

The upper part of the stela which exhibits this inscription is occupied by a bas-relief, showing the king, Jehavmelech himself, in a costume apparently borrowed from the Persian fashion of his day, as he offers prayers to the goddess. The latter appears in the form of the Egyptian Hathor, with the horns of the heifer and the disk of the moon between them. The intercourse between Egypt and Phœnicia had in fact in this case, as in others, led to an assimilation of certain deities and worships proper to the two nations. We have seen in the last chapter that the worship of Ishtar, or Ashtoreth, was introduced from Mesopotamia into Egypt during the rule of the eighteenth dynasty, and that the Pharian Isis was identical with the Semitic goddess. On this stela we see that Beltis, another Semitic goddess, was also identified by the Egyptians with Hathor, or Isis. Although the inscription of Byblus is later, the union of the two worships may be supposed to have taken

or "Marauders." This term cannot fail to remind us of the ancient Phœnician inscription at Tangier, quoted by Procopius, which stated that those who set it up had been driven out of Canaan by the "Robber" Joshua, the son of Nun. The term expresses the view which the inhabitants of a country naturally take of an army of invaders. The letter of Rip-Adda, given above, shows the manner in which these "Marauders" are spoken of; the following passages will illustrate it further.

The governor of Gezer writes :—

"Let the king save us out of the hand of the 'Marauders,' that the Marauders may not destroy us."

Dagan-takala appeals to the Pharaoh :—

"Deliver me from my powerful enemies, from the hand of the Marauders."

Another writer states :—

"The king's country is in the power of the Marauders. Let the king give instructions to his officer and send him to the king's country, and let the king despatch his troops to help me."

The only hope for protection which those who remained true to the authority of Amenophis could cling to lay in the arrival of the Egyptian troops. Accordingly, they send the most pressing appeals to Egypt that the soldiers may be sent. Rip-Adda of Byblus, for instance, whose letters have already been quoted, writes :—

"Let the king send his troops to the city of Byblus."

Milkili, also governor of a town tributary to Egypt, writes :—

“Let the king send troops to his servants.”

Shuardata writes :—

“Let the king learn that I am alone ; let the king, my lord, send many troops to deliver me.”

It was the business of those who held offices under the Egyptian king to provide the army of the Pharaoh with food, drink, lodging, and all the necessities of life. Thus we find statements like the following, which is made by Widya, governor of Ascalon :—

“Behold, I have obeyed the words of the king, my lord, the son of the sun-god, and behold I have sent meat, palm-wine, corn, oxen before the face of the troops of the king, my lord. . . . What is thy servant, a dog, that he should not listen to the words of the king, the son of the sun-god ?”

And again :—

“Behold, I have sent everything . . . palm-wine, oxen . . . straw, everything that the king, my lord, said to me.”

Akizzi, an officer of the king of Egypt at Katna, writes to Amenophis IV. :—

“My lord, behold the troops and chariots of my lord the king. . . . I have prepared meat, and palm-wine, and oxen . . . and honey, and oil before the face of the troops and the chariots of my lord. Behold the great men of my lord ; let my lord ask them.”

The officials of Canaan were also expected to supply contingents of their own to the royal forces. This they assure the Pharaoh, in their despatches, that they have done. For instance :—

"Thou didst send word to me that I should send men to join the troops [from Egypt]. Behold, I have sent all my men and my chariots to join the troops of the king, my lord."

A similar passage occurs in a letter to the Pharaoh from Ammunira of Beyrout, which has already been quoted.

Among the other despatches from officials in Canaan is one from Zimrida of Lachish. This has a special interest on account of the important excavations which Mr. Petrie has lately been undertaking at Tell Hesi, on the site of this ancient and famous city. Moreover, not only has Mr. Petrie discovered many important traces of Lachish and of the different populations that successively occupied it, but a tablet inscribed with cuneiform characters has recently been disinterred there, together with Egyptian scarabs and beads of the same period as the Tell el-Amarna tablets, and this text actually contains the name of Zimrida. We must all look forward with interest to the forthcoming translation of this document by Professor Sayce. The letter of Zimrida found at Tell el-Amarna runs as follows:—

[After salutations.]

"The messenger of the king, my lord, whom he sent to me. I have obeyed his words with all my heart. Behold, I have sent the troops as he commanded me."

The cities of Gaza and Joppa, in South Palestine, are mentioned in the following epistle, in which Yabitiri professes his loyalty to the king of Egypt, and asks for his favour:—

[After salutations.]

"See, I am a faithful servant of the king, my lord. I look this way and I look that way, and there is no light; but when I look towards the king, my lord, there is light. A tile may give way beneath its . . . but I shall never give way beneath the feet of the king, my lord. Let the king, my lord, enquire of Yankhamu, his Officer of the Gate, whether I am a child. Bring me into the land of Egypt, and I will go down to the king, my lord, and stand in the gate of the king, my lord. Let the king enquire of his Officer of the Gate whether I defended the gate of the city of Gaza and the gate of the city of Joppa. I have been with the troops of the king, my lord; wherever they have been, I have been with them. Behold, I am with them now. The yoke of the king, my lord, is upon my neck, and I will bear it."

The most powerful enemies of the Egyptian power in Western Asia were the Hittites, the rightful owners since the time of Abraham* of the inland territories of Canaan, which formed indeed part of "the land of the Hittites."† It was with the Hittite king that traitors to the Pharaoh like Abd-Ashirta were conspiring, all the time that they were protesting their own loyalty; this we see from the following passages.

Aziru, son of Abd-Ashirta, alludes to the charge of treachery made against him in these words:—

"Another thing: The king, my lord, also said to me: 'Why hast thou given answers to the messenger of the king of the Hittites, and hast given no answers to my messenger?' Yet this is a country subject to my lord, and the king placed me here among the governors.

"Let the king's messenger go, and repeat all that I have said before the king, and let the king hear my words."

The real character of Aziru and his father, Abd-Ashirta, is stated by Rip-Adda of Byblus, who says:—

* Genesis xiii. 3 ff.

† Joshua i. 4.

"Abd-Ashirta is a servant of the king of Mitani, and of the king of Kashi, and of the king of the Hittites; he seeks to seize all the cities of the king, the sun-god."

In the last chapter we saw that Tushratta announced to Amenophis III. a victory which he had gained over the Hittites as a piece of good news which would rejoice the heart of the king of Egypt. But in the reign of Amenophis IV. the dreaded enemy had begun to encroach on the territories that paid tribute to the Pharaoh, and from this time onward, until their crushing defeat at the hands of Rameses II., the Hittites seem to have steadily progressed in power. Several of their depredations are mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna tablets. They ravaged the city of Katna, in company with the rebel Aziru, as we learn from the following passages in a letter from Akizzi to Amenophis IV.:—

"Let the king, my lord, know . . . that now the king of the land of the Hittites has burnt [our cities] with fire, and carried off their gods and their inhabitants. . . .

"Aziru has seized the men of Katna, my servants, and [carried them away] from the country of my lord."

The invasion of territories tributary to Egypt by the Hittites is also thus alluded to:—

"The king of the land of the Hittites has taken up his quarters in the land of Nukhashi, and I fear because of him, that he will go up into the land of the Amorites."

To many readers, perhaps the most interesting of the Tell el-Amarna letters will be those written from Jerusalem, which, as well as the rest of Canaan, was at

the time of the eighteenth dynasty tributary to the king of Egypt. The city is already called *Urusalim*, Jerusalem, not Jebus. In the reign of Amenophis IV. the Egyptian supremacy was on the wane here, as in other parts of the country, and the district was attacked by the league of princes adverse to the claims of the Pharaoh, who were doing their best to overthrow his power. In speaking of these "leaguers," or "allies," we must not omit to notice a different view which has been taken of the meaning of this word. It is written in these texts in the form *Khabiri*, and might on philological grounds be conceived to be identical with the word Hebrew; on this account it has been suggested that we have here an actual allusion to the invasion of the Hebrews* and their attack upon Jerusalem. This opinion, if it were correct, would alter the view now generally taken of the date of the exodus, which is indeed uncertain; but the matter is simply mentioned here as a suggestion which has been made.

On account of the interest naturally felt in the earliest written documents proceeding from Jerusalem, a translation of one or two of the letters of Abdi-khiba, the representative of the Pharaoh in that city, is subjoined:—

[After salutations.]

"What have I done against the king, my lord? I am slandered before the king, thus: 'Abdi-khiba is rebellious against the king, his lord.' See, as for myself, it was not my father or my mother who

* See Zimmern in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, Bd. xiii., p. 133 ff.

set me in this place, but it was the arm of the mighty king that brought me into my father's house. Why, then, should I sin against the king? As long as the king, my lord, lives, I say thus to the messengers of the king, my lord: 'Why do you favour the Leaguers (*Khabiri*), and show hostility towards the governors [of the king of Egypt]?'

"All the governors are slain; there is no governor of the king left. Let the king turn his face towards his people, and send troops. There are no longer any lands of the king left. The Leaguers (*Khabiri*) have plundered all the lands of the king. If the troops come this year, the lands of the king may yet be saved; but if they do not come, the lands of the king will be lost."

In another letter Abdi-khiba says:—

"Let the king send troops against the men who have committed sins against the king, my lord. If the troops come this year, the lands and the governors may be preserved for the king, my lord; but if they do not come, there will be no lands of the king left. See, as for this city of Jerusalem; it was not my father or my mother who gave it to me; the arm of the king gave it to me. This is the deed of Milkili, and the deed of the son of Lapapi, who have given up the king's land to the Leaguers [*Khabiri*]."

"See, the king has placed his name upon Jerusalem for ever; therefore he cannot abandon the city of Jerusalem."

In another letter Abdi-khiba writes:—

"Behold the deeds that Milkili and Shuardatum have done against the land of the king, my lord. They have brought the troops of Gezer, the troops of Gath, and the troops of Kegila, and have seized the territory of the city of *Rubute*. The land of the king has gone over to the Leaguers [*Khabiri*]. Now, moreover, a city of the territory of Jerusalem, the city of *Bit-Ninip*, a city of the king, has gone over, like the city of Kegila. Therefore let the king listen to his servant Abdi-khiba, and send troops, that I may win back the

land of the king for the king. But if no troops come, then the land of the king will go over to the Leaguers [*Khabiri*].”

On the other hand, Abdi-khiba's enemy, Milkili, whom he represents as a traitor to Egypt, wrote himself to the Pharaoh, as a faithful servant of the latter:—

“I have heard the message of the king, my lord, to me, and let the king send troops to the aid of his servants. . . .”

In another letter Milkili speaks of an outrage committed upon him by an Egyptian official, and demands that the king should assist him to take revenge upon the aggressor:—

“Let the king know the deed that Yankhamu has done since I left the presence of the king, my lord.

“He said to me: ‘Give up to me thy wife and thy children.’ Let me destroy him (?); let the king know this deed. Let the king send chariots, and bring me into his presence; let him not escape (?).”

Possibly, if the conjecture may be allowed, this outrage on the part of a high Egyptian official drove Milkili into rebellion.

The city of Beyrout is alluded to as a seaport, which possessed ships; and the ships of Sidon and Zemar are also mentioned. Damascus appears as a city loyal to the king of Egypt, and distressed at the victory of his enemies.

“My lord, as the city of Damascus in the land of *Ubi* [*i.e.*, Hobah] falls at thy feet and grasps them with her hands, so the city of Katna falls at thy feet and grasps them with her hands.”

We may now recapitulate some of the results which have been obtained from a study of the letters from Canaan, with the full conviction that further researches will bring to light much more that is still to be learnt from these documents of clay. We see, then, a great part, if not the whole, of Canaan and Syria between B.C. 1500 and B.C. 1400 in a disorganised condition. The native princes, driven to despair by the apathy and inaction of their Egyptian suzerain, are allying themselves with the kings of the Hittites, and seizing the towns and ships of the Pharaoh. The representatives of the king of Egypt are driven away, or blockaded and reduced to the greatest straits in the cities that still remain faithful, while their appeals to Egypt for help too often remain unanswered. This state of affairs undoubtedly prepared the way for the invasion of the Israelites. When Joshua entered the land of the Amorites and the land of Canaan, he found the country broken up into small States, governed by petty kings, or chiefs, who were constantly fighting with one another. It will be remembered that Adonibezek spoke of seventy kings whom he had vanquished and captured, and whom he mutilated and kept in his palace, where they gathered up crumbs under his table. If the Egyptian supremacy had still remained unshaken in Western Asia, it may be conceived that the conquest of Canaan would have been, for a small nation like the Israelites, exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. In the absence, however, of a sovereign power, the defeat and conquest of a number of petty independent chieftains was a matter of comparative facility.

CHAPTER IX.

SHUSHAN THE PALACE.

THE first journey made by M. Marcel Dieulafoy to Persia, in 1882, resulted in the publication of "*L'Art antique de la Perse*"—a work which is now one of the chief authorities on the antiquities existing in the dominions of the Shah. During this expedition, however, the enterprising architect and engineer had not been able to do more than glance at the remains of Susa ; but what he saw had filled him with a strong desire to bring to light some of the treasures concealed beneath the three mounds which the natives at the present day designate as Shush. Our own countryman, Loftus, had already attacked this interesting site in 1852, when he formed part of an English Commission entrusted with the task of settling the boundary-line between the Ottoman territories and the Kingdom of Persia. Profiting by the immunities which were calculated to secure them from annoyance on a spot of peculiar sanctity, in the neighbourhood of the reputed tomb of the Prophet Daniel, in the midst of a population notoriously fanatical in character, Loftus and his companions had dug some trenches in the tumuli of Shush, and had been so far successful that they had found the bases of a few

columns and the sub-structure of an edifice built in the form of a large hypostyle hall. The most important discovery made by the English excavators was that of the trilingual cuneiform inscriptions on the bases of the columns; for through these the date of the edifice became at once incontestable. The words engraved upon the stone, in the same characters as those found at Persepolis, ran as follows :—

“Thus says Artaxerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of all the countries that are upon this earth, the son of Darius the king, who was the son of Artaxerxes the king, who was the son of Xerxes the king, who was the son of Darius the king, who was the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenid: ‘My ancestor Darius built this *Apadâna* in former times. In the reign of Artaxerxes, my grandfather, it was consumed by fire. By the grace of Ahuramazda, Anaitis, and Mithras, I have restored this *Apadâna*. May Ahuramazda, Anaitis, and Mithras protect me from all evil; and may they preserve from destruction this that I have built.’”

This important inscription, written in Persian, Susian, and Babylonian, at once fixed the period of the structure discovered by Loftus; it had been first erected by Darius Hystaspis (B.C. 521-485), partly burnt down in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus (B.C. 464-425), and restored by Artaxerxes Mnemon (B.C. 406-359). The order of the Persian kings given us by Greek historians was fully confirmed by this same inscription. The name of Anaitis illustrated a passage of the Babylonian historian, Berosus, quoted by Clement of Alexandria, to the effect that images of this goddess were first set up by Artaxerxes Mnemon in the

chief towns of his empire. The name of Mithras confirmed various passages in ancient authors, which allude to the worship of this god under the Achæmenian sovereigns.

Loftus was not able to carry on his excavations. The religious susceptibilities of the people were aroused; the tomb of Daniel was thought to be in danger of profanation by the infidels. After the departure of the English mission, the cholera broke out in the province of Arabistan; it was, of course, attributed to the vengeance of the prophet, who thus punished the Mussulmans for tolerating the presence of the unbelievers. Since that time no Europeans had stayed upon the spot.

M. Dieulafoy, however, was not deterred by the reputation of the inhabitants from wishing to undertake new excavations at Susa. Interested by what he had seen of the site in his first visit to Persia, he solicited, in 1884, the help of the French Government to enable him to return thither, and to make fresh researches among the tumuli. He received the promise of a certain sum of money; two young men were appointed to act as his assistants; and equipments were furnished by the offices of war and marine. The chief difficulty lay in obtaining the consent of the Persian Government, and the first request was met by a direct refusal. By means, however, of a European physician intimate with the Shah, the sovereign himself was induced to take an interest in the matter. It was represented to him that the greatness of his predecessors, the Achæmenian

monarchs, would be freshly illustrated by the excavation of another of their magnificent residences, and that his own reputation in Europe was raised whenever he appeared in the light of a promoter of learning. Finally, towards the end of 1884, the Government of Nasr ed-din Shah gave the required permission, with certain qualifications.

“The Persian Government offered some observations with regard to the tribes of marauders inhabiting Arabistan; formulated certain fears on the subject of local fanaticism; made reservations referring to the tomb of Daniel; required a share of the objects discovered; claimed sole ownership of the precious metals; and granted us authority to make excavations in the tumuli of Elam.”

Accordingly, M. Dieulafoy started for the East, accompanied by the rest of the mission, and, above all, by Madame Dieulafoy, who took the most enthusiastic interest in the expedition, and whose “*Journal of the Excavations*” gives us a lively account of their origin and progress. The first day of the work is thus described:—

“March 1st, 1885.—The excavations at Susa were to begin to-day; Marcel promised this, and he has kept his word. His battalion is not brilliant: an old Arab, who pastures, for want of more substantial food, on the young thistles in the valley; a one-eyed man, who has come on a pilgrimage to the Prophet Daniel, in the hope of obtaining the cure of his second eye, already compromised; the son of a widow, dying of starvation, also under the protection of Daniel; two supernumerary soldiers, our servants, and the two members of our mission. Armed with spades and pickaxes, we made our way towards a brick wall, made visible by a small landslip near our tents.

“The honour of inaugurating the work had been reserved for me.

With much emotion, I seized a heavy sapper's pickaxe, and worked until my strength was extinguished ; Marcel relieved me, and our acolytes carried the soil away."

The character of the population with which the French mission had to deal, and the real dangers that



MODERN TOWN OF SHUSTER.

they incurred, in spite of the protection of the central government, were soon apparent. The governor of the district, Mozaffer el Molk, was so much alarmed for the safety of the Europeans entrusted to his care, that only a fortnight after their arrival at Susa he addressed the following letter to M. Dieulafoy :—

"SIR,—The Mussulmans are ignorant, uncivilized, and unruly; they are, in fact, a stumbling-block in the way of your work. In my absence, it is difficult for you, I believe, to direct your mission: The tumult of passions aroused by the religion of Islam will, perhaps, cause a great danger to you, which it will be impossible for me to prevent.

"It would be better for you to leave your property at Dizful, and to come and stay at Shuster, near me.

"After my return to Dizful, you will proceed with your business, with the escort, the support, and the advice of the Government."

M. and Mme. Dieulafoy and their companions, however, were not so easily frightened. They saw that their work would be much delayed, and, perhaps, could never be resumed, if they acceded to the governor's proposal, and they determined to stick to their post. The gravity of the risk which they incurred was afterwards explained to them. They were informed that—

"The day after our departure [from Dizful for Susa], five or six hundred fanatics, roused by the thought that Christians were about to defile the tomb of Daniel with their presence, and, perhaps, to steal the body of the holy prophet, and to transport this palladium of the district into Frangistan, assembled in the mosques of the town. These defenders of the faith made a vow either to expel the unbelievers by main force or to massacre them; and with this object they set off on the way to Susa.

"Some were armed with bad muskets and pistols, others with lances; all—and this is a serious matter—with slings, which, in the hands of the people of Dizful, are a terrible weapon. The whole troop, dancing and howling, invoked the names of Ali and his sons, the martyrs of Medina and Kerbela. They crossed the plain, and had forded the river—twelve miles separated them from Susa—when they were joined by two horsemen, who had galloped after them at full speed from the town. These were the sons of Sheikh Mohammed Taher. The sheikh, terrified by the unauthorised character of this remarkable crusade, had enjoined them to bring back the demoniacs.

“At first the young men were scouted, and treated as unbelievers; but they succeeded at last in gaining a hearing. The Dizfulis consented to return to the town, under the solemn promise that a deputation of descendants of Mahomet, doctors of the law, and their own leaders, should make next day the severest inquiries. If the Christians had violated the tomb of Daniel, Sheikh Taher in person would lead the agents of justice, and preside over the massacre of the criminals.”

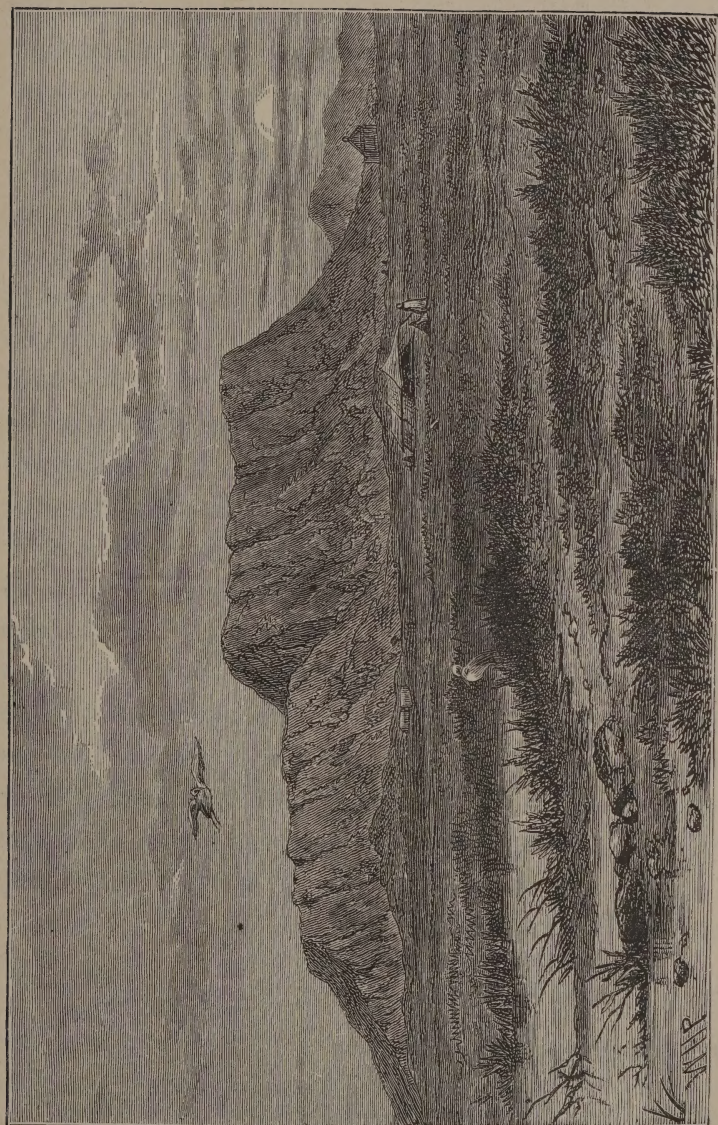
After a time the religious passions of the people grew calmer; they found that the strangers preserved the most careful respect for the shrine of the prophet, and never allowed themselves to approach its walls, and, moreover, that they were ready to pay good wages to all who would work for them. Accordingly, the idea of molesting the French mission was given up, the excavators were left in peace, and were able to enroll a fair body of workmen to act under their orders. The population in the neighbourhood of Susa is composed of three entirely distinct races, and M. Dieulafoy had representatives of each race under his orders; but the three bands had no dealings with each other.

First, there were the Dizfulis from the neighbouring town—a people of mean physique, small and nervous, and generally affected with some skin disease, who, nevertheless, were more intelligent and did more work than the Persian nomads. The latter are men of Aryan descent, but lead a similar life to that of other desert tribes; they are tall and powerful, but dull and stupid. It is thought that the former of these two races represents the aboriginal Elamites or Susians, and that the latter may be descendants of the Persians who, under

Cyrus, conquered the country. In support of this theory, it is alleged that the vocabulary of the Dizfulis is full of words foreign to the language of the Persians. The third class of labourers employed by M. Dieulafoy was taken from the Bedouin Arabs.

The plains of Susiana are in many respects similar to those of Chaldæa. The rivers—no longer kept in check by the ancient canals, of which there are many traces—annually turn the lands upon their borders into a marsh. The Eulæus, or Choaspes, was formerly celebrated as the river of Susa: it was the Ulai to which Daniel saw himself transported in a vision. Of this stream alone the Persian monarchs drank, and in their expeditions they carried with them, in waggons, silver casks containing its waters. Now, under the name of the Kerkha, it spreads over the swamps or loses itself in canals choked up with mud; not a town or hamlet is to be seen on its banks. All the glories of Susiana, except its sun, have set; but the latter is still so powerful that it forces the inhabitants to roof their narrow huts—built of palm-logs—with thick coatings of clay, as in the time of Augustus.

M. Dieulafoy and his mission spent two seasons at Shush, living in tents on provisions purchased from the neighbouring tribes, and working indefatigably at the excavations. There are three mounds on the spot. One, higher and steeper than the rest, is believed to be the citadel which the Greeks named the Memnonium, and supposed to have been built at the time of the siege of Troy. The next tumulus is lower, but covers a far



MOUNDS OF SHUSH OR SUSA.

larger area of ground. This is believed to conceal the greater part of the remains of the royal palace, including the harem, or "houses of the women,"* and the lodgings of the king himself. In these two mounds the excavations have not been fruitful. Trenches dug in the citadel, to the depth of five yards, have given small results. In the second tumulus large sub-structures of brick have been found; the ground-plan of a keep or donjon has been traced; a doorway, and part of the bronze plating of a door, handsomely decorated with rosettes, have been discovered; and the base of a small column, in the form of a lotus-flower, bearing an inscription of Darius, the father of Xerxes, has been disinterred. The researches on the third mound—that in which Loftus laid bare the bases of four columns—have yielded much greater results. They have, in fact, enabled M. Dieulafoy to reconstruct in imagination, with all its details, the structure which the Persian kings, Darius and Artaxerxes, here erected, and which forms the scene of more than one narrative in the Hebrew Scriptures. This structure is, as these monarchs themselves call it in their inscriptions, an *Apadâna*. The name is an old Persian one; and in the Babylonian version of the inscriptions, where the Persian text has—

"I have built this Apadâna,"

the engraver has written—

"I have built this which is called Apadâna,"

* Esther ii. 3, 9, 14, etc.

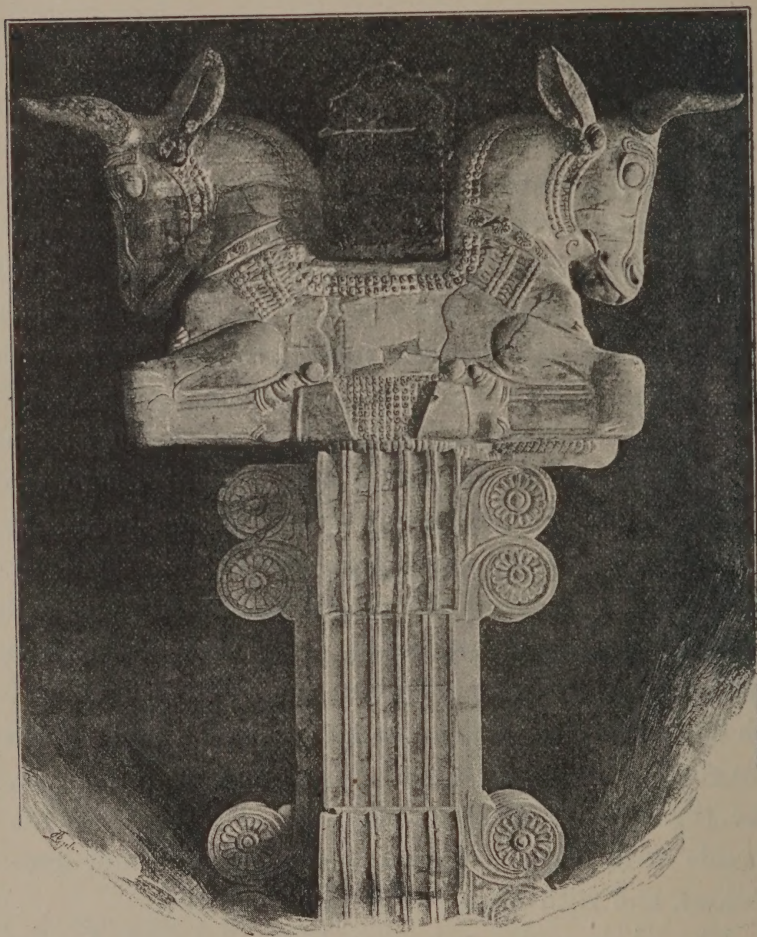
thus proving that he is employing a word foreign to the language of Babylon. Nevertheless, the term is borrowed by the Prophet Daniel when he says :—

“He shall plant the tabernacles of his *palace* between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain.”

The plan of the *Apadāna* at Susa is as follows :—There is a square hall, supported by thirty-six columns in rows of six. The two sides and back of the hall were composed of solid walls of brick-work, each pierced by four doors ; the front of the hall is open. On each side of this central structure are two porticoes, each formed of two rows of six columns. At the back is an apartment of no great depth, but of the same width as the whole building, closed on all sides, except where the two doors give admittance into the central hall. At each corner of the building stands what M. Dieulafoy calls a “pylon,” composed of two high walls, crowned with battlements, and standing at right angles to one another ; these “pylons” form wings at each side of the entrance to the central hall, and at each end of the two colonnades at the sides. They were built of brick, like the rest of the structure, and decorated on the outside with narrow perpendicular recesses and projections, and with friezes of enamelled bricks.

The whole edifice was covered by a flat roof of cedar rafters, supported by beams of the same wood, which rest on the summit of the pillars ; all this timber was brought, with immense labour, from Phœnicia. The columns are of the same order as those found at

Persepolis, and described in a former chapter. A tall slender shaft, resting on a base in the shape of an

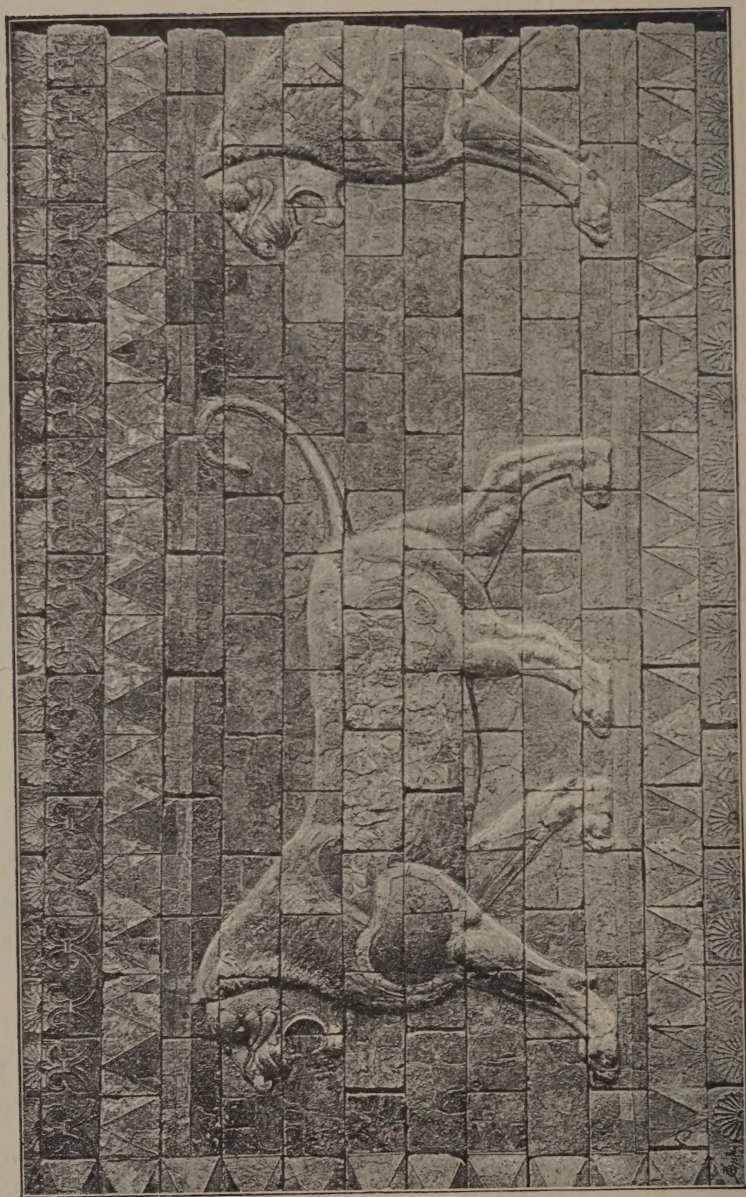


CAPITAL OF COLUMN AT SUSA.

inverted lotus-flower, supports a massive capital formed of a bell or lotus, above which rise four inverted volutes, one on each side, capped by the colossal heads, necks,

and bent fore-legs of two bulls, facing opposite ways. The columns, delicately fluted, are of a grey limestone, which becomes dark when polished, but when left untouched appears nearly white. The walls were coated with stucco, coloured red; the floor was paved with bricks. The doorways and false windows were of the same grey marble as the pillars; they were surmounted by a projecting Egyptian cornice, carved into the form of two rows of lotus-leaves.

The enamelled bricks found by M. Dieulafoy at Susa constitute a most important illustration of the history of the ceramic art. Near the top of the outer wall of the "pylons" was a frieze, twelve feet in height, representing a procession of lions between two horizontal borders, decorated with palmettes, rosettes, and denticulations. The beasts stand out in relief from a background of pale turquoise-blue; they are conventionally treated, both in design and in colour; the greater part of their bodies is greyish-white, the muscles are marked in deep yellow, and the mane is of a watery green. The frieze of the archers is even handsomer than this; it is about fifteen feet in height, and ran along the upper part of the side walls of the *Apadána*, on the outer face; it exhibits a procession of "Immortals," or members of the body-guard of the Persian kings. They wear long-sleeved tunics, alternately yellow and white, spangled either with daisies or with squares enclosing what appears to be the image of a fortress; their heads are crowned with twisted turbans of a green colour; they wear bracelets



FRIEZE OF LIONS AT SUSA.

and ear-rings, and are shod with laced boots of blue or yellow. They are armed with a bow and quiver and carry a pike or lance, the shaft of which ends in a silver knob. Their nationality is shown by the deep brown of their skins; they came from the province or satrapy of India. These enamelled bricks remind us, in some degree, of those which decorated the palaces of Assyria and Babylonia; but they are superior in colour and design, and distinguished by the fact that the forms stand out in relief.

The palace of the Persian kings at Susa is one of the very few buildings, forming the scene of a narrative in the Old Testament, which have been sufficiently brought to light by modern excavators to enable us to reconstruct them with certainty in imagination. The city of Susa is mentioned in three books of the Hebrew Canon: in the Books of Daniel, Nehemiah, and Esther.

It was to Susa that Daniel was transported in one of his visions. He says:—

“In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.

“And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

“Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

“I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

“And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground : and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

“And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

“And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns : and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him : and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

“Therefore the he-goat waxed very great : and when he was strong, the great horn was broken ; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

“And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven ; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

“Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

“And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground ; and it practised, and prospered.

“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot ?

“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

Such was the vision of the succession of dynasties, which Daniel saw in the form of the Apocalyptic animals struggling on the banks of the Eulaeus at Susa.

The Book of Nehemiah begins as follows :—

"The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

"That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

"And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire."

A few verses later we find what office it was that Nehemiah held in the Palace of Susa, when he tells us as follows:—

"And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king."

He occupied, in fact, at the Persian Court the post of cupbearer—always an honourable one among the ancients.

The whole scene of the Book of Esther is laid at Susa. The narrative thus opens:—

"Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)

"That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,

"In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him;

"When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.

"And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto

great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace ;

“ Where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble : the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble.

“ And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.

“ And the drinking was according to the law ; none did compel : for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.”

The Persian monarchs of the Achæmenian line had, as it is well known, four principal residences ; they spent the spring at Babylon, the summer at Ecbatana, among the cool mountains of Media, the autumn at Persepolis, and the winter at Susa. The temperature of the last place is exceedingly high during part of the year.

“ Susiana is a wealthy province, but possesses a burning, fiery climate, especially in the neighbourhood of the capital. It is said that lizards and serpents, when the sun is at its full height—at noon-tide in summer—if they attempt to cross the streets of the city, are scorched to death before they have time to reach the other side (a thing that would never happen at Persepolis, although it lies farther to the south) ; and that if cold water is set out in the sun it becomes hot immediately, and barley scattered in the sun is parched as in an oven ; on this account the roofs of the houses are covered with earth two cubits in depth, and the houses are built narrow but long, for there is a lack of large timber, and yet the rooms must be as large as possible, to avoid suffocation. . . . The reason of the heat is said to be that there is a range of high mountains lying towards the north, which keeps off all the winds from that quarter.”*

We know from the cuneiform inscriptions that Susa had been the capital of the ancient Elamite kings long

* Strabo, xv. 3.

before the province was conquered by Cyrus. The Greeks believed the city to have existed in the time of the Trojan war, but we have better evidence of its antiquity in the testimony of Sardanapalus, who states that Kudurnankhundi, the Elamite king, had carried off the image of Nana from Babylonia to Susa in B.C. 2280. The name is *Shushan* in Assyrian, as in Hebrew. Sardanapalus sacked the city about B.C. 650 ; he says :—

“I conquered Shushan, the great city, the dwelling of their gods.
By the command of Ashur and Ishtar, I entered into the palaces, and sojourned there with joy. I opened their treasuries, in which gold, silver, and other possessions were stored, which the ancient kings of Elam and the kings who have reigned there up to this day collected and placed there ; on which no other enemy besides me had laid his hand. I brought it out and accounted it as my booty. Silver, gold, and other possessions, the property of Babylonia, which the earlier kings of Elam had carried away in seven expeditions, and brought to Elam. . . . Jewels, a costly treasure, such as beseeemed the royal dignity, which former kings of Babylonia had sent to Elam to make alliance with its kings ; garments such as beseeemed the royal dignity ; weapons of war ; furniture, which had been brought into the palaces, upon which the kings had sat and laid down, out of which they had eaten and drunk, poured libations and anointed themselves ; chariots and waggons ; horses with bridles of gold or silver ; all this I carried away as booty to Assyria. The temple-tower of Shushan, faced with alabaster, I destroyed . . . their gods and goddesses, with their treasures, their possessions, their vessels, their priests, I carried away to Assyria. Thirty-two statues of kings, of silver, gold, bronze, and stone . . . I took with me to Assyria.”

A hundred years later, Susiana became part of the empire of Cyrus ; but the conqueror did not make it

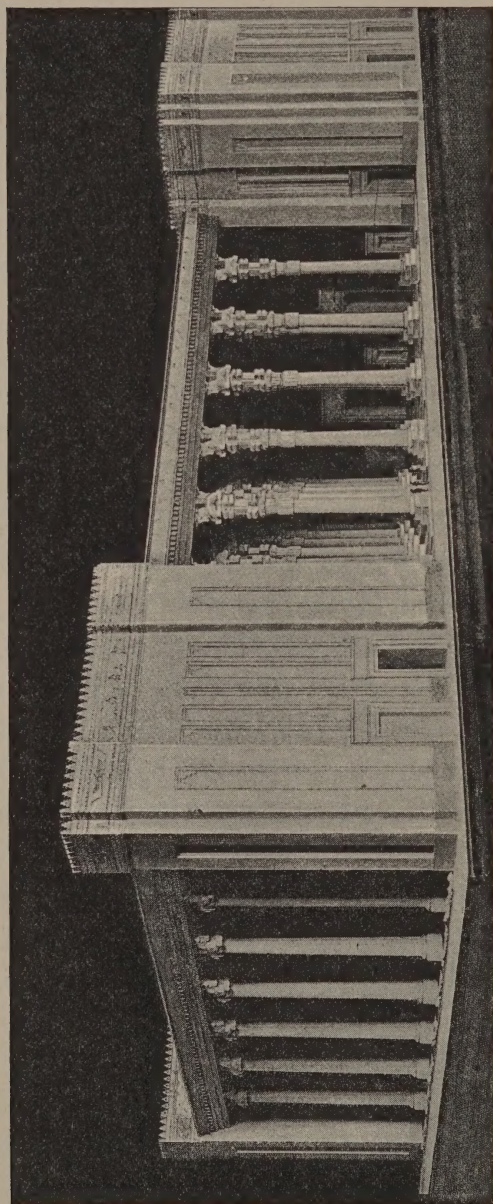
one of his capitals. It was his son, Cambyses, who formed the design of building a great palace at Susa. He sent a body of workmen from Egypt, according to the tradition current in that country at the time of Augustus, to construct residences for himself at Ecbatana, Persepolis, and Susa. The Persians had no architecture of their own; they were backward in all the arts; and on this account Cambyses chose builders from Egypt, so famous for its great temples and palaces, to build for him in his own country. But his early death prevented him from carrying out his designs; and it was his successor, Darius, who, as the already quoted inscriptions tell us, was actually the founder of the palaces of Persepolis and Susa. The employment of Egyptian architects, however, accounts for many features in the construction and decoration of these buildings. The architecture of the Achæmenian period was a combination of forms borrowed from Assyria and Egypt, the two most civilized provinces of the empire of Cambyses and Darius. Everyone must recognise the influence of Egypt in the lotus-flowers of the columns at Susa, the volutes, and the animals' heads in the capitals of the columns; the cornice of the doorways is purely Egyptian; the traditions of the Nile are as distinctly to be recognised here as those of the Euphrates and the Tigris in the winged bulls at Persepolis, or the lions in the frieze of glazed bricks. Nevertheless, there is something quite distinctive in Persian architecture; the foreign forms are combined, and modified by the spirit of the ruling race.

M. Dieulafoy thus describes his own impressions of the Persian palaces :—

“For my part, when I try to restore these grand structures in my fancy : when I seem to see those porticoes of marble or porphyry columns : those double-headed bulls, the horns, feet, eyes, and collars of which must have been overlaid with a thin sheet of gold : the cedar beams and rafters of the intablature and the roof ; the designs in brick-work, like heavy lace, standing out upon the walls ; the cornices covered with enamelled tiles of turquoise-blue glittering in the sunlight : when I think of the draperies hung before the doors, the delicate open wood-work of the *mashrabiye*hs, the thick carpets laid upon the pavement, I ask myself sometimes whether the religious monuments of Egypt, or the very temples of Greece itself, ought to produce upon the imagination of the visitor so strong an impression as the palaces of the great king.”

The *Apadāna* of Darius and Artaxerxes at Susa, excavated by M. Dieulafoy, was probably the Hall of the Knob-bearers, or body-guard, in which the king often sat with his wives, who sang and played the harp. The knob-bearers, or *Melophori*, were a band of a thousand picked men, selected from the ten thousand Immortals ; their name alludes to the knob at the end of their pikes. When the great king walked through the hall he trod upon Sardinian carpets, reserved exclusively for his own royal feet ; and when he reached the entrance he mounted his chariot by a golden footstool, always carried behind him by a slave for that purpose. When Darius or Xerxes gave judgment, or consulted his counsellors in this hall, he sat upon a golden throne, under a crimson canopy, embroidered with gold and stretched upon golden supports. In the sculptures of Persepolis we see very careful representations of the

royal throne, which appears to be after the Assyrian



RESTORATION OF THE APADĀNA AT SUSĀ.

pattern. Each side of the canopy is similarly decorated with two bands of different design, one above the other; a horizontal row of daisies is divided by a strip from a row of bulls; in the middle is the winged figure of Ahuramazda.

In this very *Apadāna* Xerxes must have held the banquet described in the Book of Esther, and consulted with his chief men on the project of war with Greece.

We know from Herodotus what the council-meetings of the Persians were like; they were literally "banquets," or, rather, "drinking-bouts," as the Book of Esther calls them:—

"They are accustomed to debate upon the most important matters when they are drunk; and whatever they approve in their debate is proposed to them on the next day, when they are sober, by their host, in whose house they happen to be deliberating, and if they still approve the matter when they are sober, they finally decide upon it. But if they have a preliminary consultation upon any matter while they are sober, they debate it afresh when they are drunk."

The Persians were much given to wine, although this must have been an expensive luxury among them; for no vines were grown in Susiana or Persia until the Macedonians planted them, at the time of Alexander's conquest. The Persian kings had their wine imported; they only drank Chalybonian, which must be the "royal wine" of Esther i. 7.

The royal banquets of Persia are thus described:—

"Those who wait upon the kings of the Persians at their chief meal all wash themselves before they serve, and wear fair garments, and busy themselves almost half the day over the meal. Some of the king's guests eat without, and these can be seen by any who wish; and others eat within, with the king. But the latter do not sit at the same table with him, for there are two rooms next to one another, in one of which the king takes his meal, and in the other the guests; and the king can see them, through the curtain which hangs over the door, but they cannot see him. Some, however, if it is a feast-day, eat in the same room with the king, in the great house. And when the king has a drinking party (and this he often does), he generally has twelve boon companions. When they have finished their meal, the king sitting by himself and the guests without, one of the eunuchs calls the latter in; and when they enter they drink with the king, but not the same wine; and they sit on

the ground, but he reclines on a couch with golden feet ; and when they are drunk they go away. Generally the king breakfasts and sups alone ; but sometimes his wife and some of his sons sup with him, and the ladies of the harem sing and play the harp during the meal." *

At some of the royal banquets, however, it is said that fifteen thousand men were present, and that the expense of the meal amounted to four hundred talents,† or about £1 7s. a head in our money.

The Persians were also celebrated for the variety of their drinking vessels, "diverse one from the other," in the words of the Book of Esther. Several forms are mentioned by Greek authors: one kind of cup resembled a golden egg, out of which the king drank. Alexander found many gold, silver, and jewelled cups among the treasures of the Persian kings ; and he himself gives a list of such, naming the various sorts of drinking-vessels, which cannot all now be identified. There were

"Three silver-gilt *batiacæ* ; one hundred and seventy-six silver *condya* ; thirty-three of the same, gilded ; one silver *tisigites* ; thirty-two silver-gilt spoons ; one silver vegetable-dish ; one silver wine-jar of foreign workmanship, enamelled with colours ; twenty-nine other small drinking-vessels of every shape ; drinking-horns, *batia*, gilded vessels of Lycian workmanship ; censers and bowls."

Many ancient customs of the Persian Court have been retained during the different dynasties down to modern times ; and Anthony Sherley, whose name has already appeared in former chapters, witnessed a series of banquets at the Court of Shah Abbas, which recall to

* Heraclides in Athenæus, iv. 26.

† Ctesias and Dino, in Athenæus, iv. 27.

the reader the scenes described in the first chapter of the Book of Esther :—

“ For thirty days continuallie the king made that feast in a great garden of more than two miles compasse, under tents pitched by certain small courses of running water, like divers rivers, where everie man that would come was placed according to his degree, either under one or other tent, provided for abundantly with meate, fruite, and wine ; drinking as they would, some largelie, some moderatelie, without compulsion. A royalty and splendor which I have not seene, nor shall not see againe but by the same king : our princes abhorring such vaine expences ; desiring rather to have the power of dominion than to make those sorts of ostentation.”

When Alexander took Susa, in B.C. 330, he found a vast treasure in the palace, including five thousand talents of uncoined gold and silver. There was also a store of nine thousand talents of gold in coin : that is to say, consisting of the well-known Darics, first introduced by Darius Hystaspis. One of the historians of Alexander tells a little anecdote of an incident which we may suppose to have occurred in the *Apadána* excavated by M. Dieulafoy :—

“ Alexander took his seat upon the royal throne, but it was too high for his stature. One of the slaves, seeing that his feet did not reach the footstool in front of the throne, brought the table of Darius, and placed it under Alexander’s feet, which were hanging in the air, and as it fitted his requirements, the king accepted the good suggestion thus made. But one of the eunuchs who stood by the throne, moved in his spirit by the changes of fortune which he beheld, wept ; and when Alexander asked him : ‘ What harm have you seen done that makes you weep ? ’ the eunuch said : ‘ Nōw I am your slave, but formerly I was the slave of Darius ; and as it is my duty to love my master, I am pained by seeing a piece of furniture, which he put to an honourable use, now dishonoured.’ When the king was reminded by

this answer of the great change that had taken place in the fortunes of the Persian monarchy, he suspected that he had been guilty of an act of pride, contrasting with his former generosity towards the captive princesses. Therefore he called the attendant who had brought the table, and bid him take it away again. Thereupon Philotas remarked: 'Nay, it is no pride, since the thing was not commanded by you; but it is done by the purpose and counsel of some good spirit.' Then the king, accepting this saying as a good omen, commanded that they should leave the table standing at the foot of the throne."

When Alexander afterwards captured Persepolis, he took his seat in a similar manner on the throne of the great king in the Persepolitan palace:—

"When he first sat under the golden canopy, on the royal seat, the Corinthian Demaratus, who had been a friend of his father, remarked, with tears of emotion, that those Greeks had been deprived of a great pleasure who had died before they could see Alexander sitting on the throne of Darius."

Among the treasures at Susa, Alexander found the famous bronze statues of Harmodius and Aristogiton, who had freed Athens from the tyranny of the sons of Pisistratus, but died as the martyrs of liberty. The statues were the work of Praxiteles. The Macedonian conqueror, the great object of whose life was to obtain the applause of the Athenians, sent them back to their city, whence they had been carried away by Xerxes, during his invasion of Greece.

Perhaps no book in the Hebrew Canon has received so many elucidations from secular sources as the Book of Esther. Much of the history may be compared with that of Herodotus; the assembly of nobles and princes

in the third year of the reign of Ahasuerus, reminds us of the council which Xerxes called at Susa, in the third year of his reign (B.C. 483), to deliberate upon the proposed invasion of Greece. Esther entered the palace in the seventh year, by which time Xerxes had returned to Susa from his ill-fated expedition. The name of India, which occurs in this book alone in the Old Testament, is found among the list of the satrapies in the Greek historian. Many other points referring to the character of the monarch, and to Persian customs, are illustrated by Herodotus and other Greek writers. Since the beginning of this century the cuneiform inscriptions have contributed their share to the elucidation of this book. Grotefend's first discovery showed that the name of the king, in its Hebrew form, was a very close reproduction of the native name of Xerxes. *Achashverosh* contains all the consonants of *Chshyarsha*, only the *y* is changed to *v*. The initial *A* is the result of the inability of the Semitic races to pronounce two consonants together at the beginning of a word; in the same way the Arabs call Plato "Iflatûn." The vowels of the name *Achashverosh* are, of course, to be taken with all reserve; they are those of the Massorah. It is interesting to compare the form of the name of *Chshyarsha*, or Xerxes, used by the Hebrews, with that employed by the Babylonians, their kinsmen. In the trilingual inscriptions of Persia, the name appears in Babylonian as *Chishiyarsha*; but in the contracts of Babylonia we meet with the forms, *Achshiyarshu*, *Akkashiyarshi*, and a very corrupt form, *Akohiakarshu*. The cuneiform

inscriptions have thus enabled us finally to reject the identification of the name *Achashverosh* with Artaxerxes, given by the Septuagint and Josephus. Saint Jerome simply reproduced the Hebrew, as closely as possible, in his form *Assuerus*; and our translators followed him with Ahasuerus.

Many other Persian words are found in the Book of Esther, in forms closely corresponding with those of the time of Xerxes. The proper names of the Persian nobles and others present difficulties; but M. Oppert has proposed explanations of nearly all of them. With regard to the names of the eunuchs, M. Oppert remarks that perhaps the latter were not Persians; and here he would seem to be right: for we are expressly told that slaves of this sort were sought for in the neighbouring countries.* But, after all, our knowledge of the old Persian language is small. Much more material might be found to elucidate the Book of Esther, and other parts of the Hebrew Canon, if the mounds of Shush were more fully excavated and made to give up all their treasures. We know very little even of what the Greeks wrote about Persia in the time of Xerxes, his predecessors and his successors; but we are never likely to recover the lost works of Dinon of Rhodes, Dionysius of Miletus, Charon of Lampsacus, Aristides of Miletus, Agatharchides of Samos, Balon of Sinope, Chrysermus of Corinth, Ctesiphon, or Pharnuchus of Nisibis—all of whom devoted complete works to the history of Persia.

* Clearchus in Athenæus, xii. 9; Herodotus, iii. 92.

If, however, the tumuli which still conceal part of the famous palace of Shushan were thoroughly searched, we might obtain much more valuable documents in the form of inscriptions in the name of the great king himself, and the very remains of the building in which he lived.

CHAPTER X.

THE STAR-GAZERS OF BABYLON.

IN a celebrated romance of the second century we read of a certain Chaldæan astrologer named Diophanes, who travelled from place to place in different parts of the Roman Empire, and succeeded in making a considerable fortune by his predictions. He was sought after by youths and maidens who wished to learn which day would be a lucky one for their wedding; he was consulted by merchants anxious to know the propitious moment for striking a bargain; enquiries were regularly made of him as to when the foundations of a house might be laid, or when a ship should sail that she might safely arrive in port, or when a traveller might start upon a journey without fear of thieves.

Unfortunately, however, for his reputation, Diophanes arrived at a certain town in Thessaly. Here he was standing one day in the market-place, surrounded by a circle of enquirers, when a merchant named Cerdo came up, and asked at what hour the stars would be favourable to the undertaking of a journey to a distant region, which his business required him to visit. The Chaldæan solemnly consulted his mysterious documents, and selected a lucky day for the proposed start; accordingly

the merchant pulled out his purse, and began to extract the customary fee of a hundred denarii, or about £3 10s.* But at that moment a young man made his way through the crowd, approached the astrologer, and affectionately saluted the latter, who was so much surprised at the unexpected arrival of his friend that he forgot the transaction in hand. "How did you fare," asked the new-comer, "on the way hither from Eubœa, where I last saw you?" "Never was there so unlucky a journey," answered the fortune-teller. "It was like the wanderings of Ulysses; I could not desire a worse experience for my greatest enemy. First, we were shipwrecked upon a desolate coast, and then, when some of us had swum to shore through the raging waves, we were attacked by a party of thieves, and my only brother was slain before my eyes." While the astrologer, put off his guard by the unlooked-for meeting, was making these frank admissions of his inability to protect himself from ill-fortune, in spite of all his knowledge of the stars, the merchant who had just consulted him listened with all his ears, and finally, before the Chaldæan could see what his client was doing, gathered up the coins that he had already laid down, and quietly made off through the crowd. Diophanes, discovering the absence of the money, was further aroused to a sense of his own imprudence by the loud laughter of the circle of bystanders.

This story shows at once the repute in which the

* That is to say, if the silver denarius is intended; there was also a copper denarius.

Chaldæan astrologers were generally held in the Roman Empire, and the opinion which educated men had of their honesty. The fame of the knowledge which the philosophers of Babylonia had acquired of the stars, and of their influence upon human life, ensured especial credit for the fortune-tellers who came from that region ; they were more readily believed than any others. The Roman ladies especially were accustomed to consult them. On the other hand, the more intelligent minds received the utterances of the Chaldæans with incredulity. A Roman philosopher of the second century once delivered a lecture on this very subject. The so-called science of astrology was, he said, the invention of needy impostors, who did not scruple to seek their living by deceiving others. To make their assertions plausible, they pointed out certain visible influences exercised by the heavenly bodies upon the course of events on our earth : as, for instance, on the tides of the ocean, which appear to be controlled by the moon. Even if these influences were actually exercised on human life and human actions, it would be impossible for mortals to perceive them and to be able to predict their results. At the most, a vague idea of the form that such influences would take would be all that the human mind could reach ; to know more than this would be omniscience, and would remove the boundary between gods and men. In the next place, if we allow the statement of the astrologers, that the heavenly influences and their manifestations had been studied on the plains of Babylonia for many thousands of years, the result of such

studies would be applicable to that region alone, since the phenomena of the sky vary according to the position of the observer. Further, the philosopher asked, acutely anticipating the discoveries of modern astronomy, how can it be taken as proved that there are no other planets in the sky besides those seven which are vulgarly accepted, and are held by their motions among the constellations to point out the destinies of men? But if there are other planets, which, because of their distance or the excessive brilliancy of their rays, are not perceptible to human vision, a knowledge of the movements of these wandering stars, as well as of the seven already known to us, would be indispensable to an accurate astrological prediction. But, in any case, how can a sufficient number of observations, extending over innumerable centuries, have been taken to justify the prediction of the events of each man's life according to the position of the stars at the hour at which he was born, especially since the necessity of noting the exact moment of birth is clear from the diversity of the fates of men born within a very short distance of time from one another, and from the variety of fortune which befalls even twins? The philosopher remarked, moreover, that the same fate overtakes many at the same moment, who yet were born under very different aspects of the stars: as, for instance, in war, when a city is sacked, in a shipwreck, or in an earthquake. How can this be reconciled with the doctrine that the different positions of the heavenly bodies indicate a different course of events in each man's life? In spite of all this, however, these

astrologers are widely credited, because perhaps from time to time they seem to hit upon the truth, partly by accident and partly because they purposely use vague and ambiguous language in uttering their prophecies. The philosopher concluded his lecture by warning his hearers to pay no heed to such impostors, who stuff the ears of their hearers with a wealth of falsehood in order that they may fill their own purses with gold. If they foretell good fortune, and the event belies them, the disappointment will be bitter; if they predict evil, and it does not come to pass, it has yet already existed in the miseries of anticipation; and, on the other hand, the knowledge of misfortune before it arrives only doubles the unkindness of fate, and the suspense caused by deferred happiness heavily discounts the expected enjoyment.

Perhaps the most famous instance known to history of the predictions of the Babylonian star-gazers—one, too, which was believed to have been duly fulfilled—is the prophecy of the priests of Bel concerning the fate that would befall Alexander the Great if he should enter the city of Babylon on his return from his Indian campaign. How far treachery lent its aid to the accomplishment of this prediction we shall never know. The Chaldæan priests were also believed to have foretold the deaths of Antigonus and Seleucus. When the latter was about to found, on the banks of the Tigris, the new capital which he designed to take the place of Babylon, and to bear his own name, he consulted the astrologers according to the custom of the country, in order to learn which day and hour would be fortunate for laying

the first stone of the city. The priests, however, attempted to deceive their foreign ruler, who was taking a step which would lead to the final ruin of Babylon, that ancient home of the gods; and Seleucus was informed that such and such a time, in reality most unpropitious, would be favourable to the success of the enterprise. The Macedonian king, however, was led by circumstances to lay the first stone of Seleucia, not at the hour indicated by the astrologers, but at a moment which, although he did not know it, was precisely the most auspicious that he could have chosen. The priests accordingly recognised the hand of the gods, and frankly informed the prince of this manifest mark of Divine favour.

It will be remembered that the Emperor Tiberius himself studied Chaldæan astrology during his stay in the island of Rhodes. His teacher was Thrasyllus, of whose learning and skill in this branch of science Tiberius convinced himself by finding that his master did not hesitate to foretell the prince's own death. The most remarkable instance on record in which Tiberius made use of his knowledge of the stars is his prediction of the fate of Galba, then consul: "Thou too, Galba," said the princely fortune-teller, "wilt some day taste of the imperial power." This was understood to be a reference to the few months' reign during which Galba, after the death of Nero, governed the Roman Empire.

The Babylonian astrologers retained their influence in the Roman world until they were discountenanced by the Christian Church. Saint Ephraim, in the fourth century, wrote ten hymns against the Chaldæans. The

doctrines of the latter were handed on to the mediæval astrologers of Europe. In the East astrology has remained in force to the present century, and many modern travellers have remarked traces of its existence. Shah Abbas, who has already been mentioned once or twice, actually abdicated his throne at the beginning of the seventeenth century in obedience to the predictions of star-gazers; but then we must remember that our own Charles I., the contemporary of the great Persian, also consulted the famous astrologer Lilly. When Claudius James Rich, the first systematic explorer of the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, visited Suleimanieh, the capital of Kurdistan, in 1820, he was requested by the Pasha to put off his entry into the city for a day or two, and then to pass through the gate exactly at nine o'clock in the morning, in order that the stars might be favourable to his presence.

The cuneiform inscriptions have, as might have been expected, furnished us with some of the documents composed or studied by the ancient star-gazers on the plains of Chaldæa. They afford a fresh proof of the great influence which astrology exercised over Babylonian life. They fully illustrate the words of Isaiah when he shows how all the knowledge of the stars claimed by the priests and philosophers of Babylon did not enable them to foresee the misfortunes of their own country, or to save it from overthrow.

“Thou hast trusted in thy wickedness. . . . Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thy heart: I am, and none else beside me.

"Therefore shall evil come upon thee: thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee: thou shalt not be able to put it off; and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

"Stand, now, with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

"Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up, and save thee from those things that shall come upon thee.

"Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flames."

We learn from the cuneiform inscriptions that the Babylonians possessed a great astrological work, consisting of seventy clay tablets. This was said to have been composed in the time of Sargon, king of Agane and Babylon, and father of Naram-Sin, to whom, as we have already seen, the Babylonian chronologists assigned an almost incredibly remote date. At least, this fact illustrates the antiquity of the observations of the stars recorded by the Chaldæans. One of the tablets shows which months are lucky and which unlucky for various actions in war; it must have been to such documents as this that the prophet Isaiah alludes in the words quoted above which speak of the "monthly prognosticators." Many tablets, written in such a way as to be unintelligible to the uninitiated, refer to all sorts of events which follow, or are supposed to follow, the appearance of the planets in certain positions. Some of the tablets contain horoscopes, and declare the fate of a person born under such and such aspects of the stars. Other documents speak of eclipses of the

moon, and relate the misfortunes which follow such phenomena.

These documents of which we speak are all astrological; they refer to the influences of the heavenly bodies on human life. But through the constant study of the moon and stars for the purpose of discovering their terrestrial effects, the Chaldæans acquired a very considerable knowledge of the movements of these orbs. Through studying astrology, they became astronomers.

It is certain that the Babylonians began to observe the stars very early, and that they possessed records of their observations reaching back to a very remote epoch. We need not believe that these records literally covered a period of hundreds of thousands of years before Christ, as the statements of many ancient writers would imply. But at least we may feel sure that the Chaldæans were the first inventors of astrology, and of her daughter, astronomy; and we may safely put aside the claims of the Egyptians, the Rhodians, or the Phœnicians to this honour. Claudius Ptolemy, who was himself born at Alexandria in the second century of our era, used Babylonian authorities for the earlier astronomical observations which he records, and he dates them by the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon in B.C. 747. Three eclipses of the moon are described by Ptolemy from Babylonian sources: one which took place in the second year of Merodach-Baladan (B.C. 719), another which occurred under Nabopolassar (B.C. 620), and a third which happened in the seventh year of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus (B.C. 522, July 16th). The original record

of this last eclipse has recently been discovered on a clay tablet, published by Father Strassmaier, S.J.

Ptolemy says :—

“In the seventh year of Cambyzes, which is the two hundred and twenty-fifth year of Nabonassar, in the Egyptian month of Phamenoth, in the night of the seventeenth-eighteenth, one hour before midnight, according to the hour of Babylon, the moon was eclipsed, beginning by the north, to the half of her diameter.”

In the cuneiform text inscribed upon the clay tablet from Babylonia we read :—

“In the year seven [of Cambyzes], in the night of Tammuz the fourteenth, three hours and one third after nightfall, there was an eclipse of the moon. At its maximum, half of the diameter disappeared, beginning by the north.”

The two statements fully agree, and Ptolemy, or rather Hipparchus, from whom he derived his knowledge of Babylonian astronomy, probably borrowed his record of this eclipse from the very cuneiform text, a copy of which is now in the British Museum.

Besides the movements of the planets, among which the Babylonians included the sun and moon, the astronomers on the banks of the Euphrates are said by ancient writers to have studied the orbits of the comets, and to have been able to predict the return of some of them. It would indeed be interesting if records of comets were distinctly to be discovered among the cuneiform tablets.

The clearest proofs of the advance made by the Babylonians in astronomical science have lately been found by Fathers Strassmaier and Epping. The docu-

ments in which the records that these scholars have given to the world appear are of a late epoch ; they are the fruit of the last days of Babylonian civilization, before it finally sank under the barbarism of the Parthian dynasty. The texts bear the date of the first centuries of Parthian rule, and, among other results, have fixed the chronology of the period to which they belong with a certainty not realised in the case of any other pre-Christian times. This is because they generally give two dates : one according to the era of Seleucus (B.C. 310), and the other according to the era of Arsaces (B.C. 246). It had already been observed that there was a slight difference between the reckoning of the Chaldæans and the Syrians from the era of Seleucus.

The texts lately published and explained by Fathers Epping and Strassmaier consist chiefly of tables drawn up to record the phases of the moon or the movements of the planets with much exactness. The Babylonian star-gazers had learnt to predict the moment of the appearance of the new moon ; they had observed the heavens with sufficient care to be able to foretell the courses of the planets through the constellations, and their position in relation to certain fixed stars. Much, however, of the work of Fathers Epping and Strassmaier is intelligible only to students of astronomy, who may be referred to the book written by these authors under the title "*Astronomisches aus Babylon*," and to their articles in certain periodical publications. The names which the Babylonians gave to the planets have been determined. There is one name occasionally given by the

Chaldæan astronomers to the planet Saturn, which also appears in the Bible. This designation is that of *Kaimanu* or *Kaivanu*, which is identical with the word *Kiun*, or *Chiun*. The prophet Amos says:—

“Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

“But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

“Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts.”

Besides the names of the planets, the names of a few of the fixed stars among the Babylonians have been discovered; and some of these clearly show whence later astronomers derived the appellations of these bodies. For instance, Regulus was called The King on the plains of Chaldæa many centuries before the science of the stars penetrated into the West. Aldebaran, in the constellation Taurus, is called the Ox. It has long been known or suspected that the Babylonians first distinguished the signs of the zodiac; and the recent researches have discovered the names of all of these in the astronomical documents. Some of these designations, at least, are identical with those that were given in later times and have come down to us: for example, the Scorpion, the Fishes, the Twins, and the Goat. The representations of the signs of the zodiac are to be seen carved on certain Babylonian monuments, notably in the case of the boundary-stones which were set up to mark the limit of a landed estate, and contain engraved upon them the

deed of sale, or of gift, surmounted by certain grotesque figures, which appear to indicate the aspect of the heavenly bodies under which the transaction was concluded. The Babylonian star-gazers were, of course, consulted as to the lucky moment for conveying land, as well as in most of the other important operations of life.

Many of the Babylonian texts which we are now considering were evidently drawn up for the purpose of composing an astronomical calendar which should predict the positions of the planets for every day. As it was already known from ancient authors, the Chaldæan astrologers named the seven planets, including the sun and moon, the "interpreters," because by their position in relation to the other stars they pointed out the destinies of man. But although the object of these ancient sages was not truly scientific, their observations attained to such exactness that they succeeded in founding the science of astronomy out of the materials which they collected for a less enlightened purpose.

For greater facility in observing the sky, it is probable that the Chaldæans made use of the tall structures which they erected to serve also as the temples of their gods, who were often personifications of the heavenly bodies. Perhaps it was on this account that they first began to build the "towers whose top should reach unto heaven." There were probably many such primitive observatories scattered over the plains of the Lower Euphrates and Tigris. We are told that there were several schools of astrologers, whose doctrines did not

always agree with one another; the most famous of these learned bodies had their seats respectively at Sippara, Erech, and Borsippa. Now, it was from the ruins of the first of these ancient cities, now called Abu Habba, that most of the astrological and astrono-



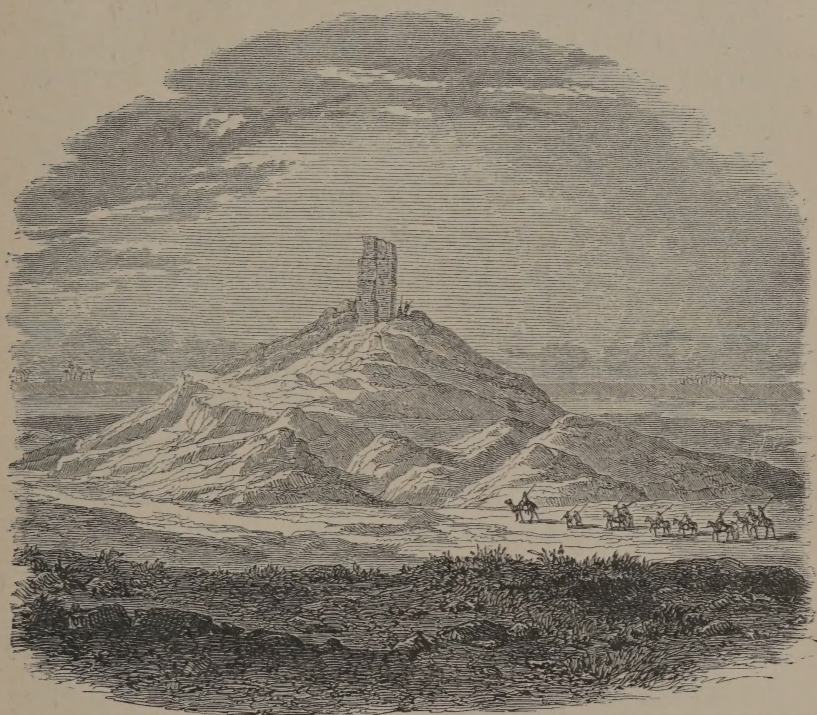
RESTORATION OF ASSYRIAN OR BABYLONIAN TOWER IN STAGES.

mical tablets have recently been brought to Europe; the documents would seem, therefore, to have formed part of the scientific archives of Sippara. The Hebrew name of this famous city on the canal Narragas was Sepharvaim, as will at once be remembered, whence the Assyrian king, Sargon, deported some of the inhabitants to people the newly vanquished country of

Samaria; and the antiquity of this city was so great that it was believed to have existed before the flood, and to have contained an ancient library, perhaps partly composed of astronomical records, dating from times anterior to that catastrophe. The principal temple at Sippara was the celebrated sanctuary of the sun-god, one of the wealthiest foundations of Babylonia, as we may conjecture from the numerous documents written in the cuneiform character referring to the property of this shrine, which the kings of the country, without doubt, had endowed as richly as the great temple of Bit-Saggil in Babylon. Attached to this temple there must have been a body of priests devoted to the study of the stars. A high tower, built in stages, and ascended by a staircase running round the outside, no doubt formed the observatory of these sages of Sippara.

The third of the astrological schools of Babylonia was that seated at Borsippa, the suburb of ancient Babylon, which M. Oppert believes to have formed part of the vast city, almost a province, as Aristotle said, enclosed by Nebuchadnezzar within two lofty walls. The close connection of Borsippa with the capital is shown by the statement in the Talmud that he who speaks of Borsippa is referring to what is in reality a part of Babylon. The observatory of the star-gazers of Borsippa was the vast temple of Bit-Zida, which still exists in the form of a mountainous ruin, under the name of Birs-Nimroud. This lofty edifice was, according to the ancient tradition of the Jews, identical with the Great Tower of Babylon, the building of which in primeval times is spoken of in

the Book of Genesis. It will be remembered that Benjamin of Tudela and the Rabbi Pethachiah both visited Birs-Nimroud, under the impression that this was actually the Tower of Babel. Father Strassmaier



BIRS-NIMROUD : THE RUINS OF BIT-ZIDA.

has lately discovered a cuneiform text which shows the high astronomical significance of Bit-Zida in the eyes of the Babylonians. It will be better to quote his own words. The text is, he says—

“A systematic extract out of an old treatise composed at Borsippa on astronomy and astrology, written by Bel-akhe-iddin, with his own

hand, at Borsippa, on the 27th Airu (the Jewish Iyyar) in the year 111 [of Arsaces], which is equivalent to the year 174 [of Seleucus], that is to say, B.C. 138.

“Like almost all astronomical texts, it begins: ‘According to the word of Bel and Beltis,’ and proceeds to treat of the significance of the summer and winter solstices, of the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, of the connection of the oracles with the full moon, of the influence of the moon and of the heat of summer on the diseases of men, and of the incantations by which sicknesses are healed, of the various sacrifices in spring and autumn, and of the significance of the heliacal rising and setting of Sirius and of the star *su-gi*. In connection with these heavenly phenomena stand the different festivals: the mourning for Tammuz at midsummer, the lamentation over the receding sun, the mourning in winter for the disappearance of vegetation, the feast of Merodach at the reappearance of vegetation in spring, the various ceremonies in public worship in which healing plants, amulets, and different kinds of wood and of corn play an important part. Here we also find tabulated the forecasts from the different sacred birds which were kept in the temples. A complete explanation of the text requires a more thorough study, but we here see for the first time the peculiarly astronomical significance of the two chief temples of Babylon, Bit-Saggil and Bit-Zida, since heavenly phenomena, such as eclipses, the revolutions and the courses of the planets, are described as ‘daughters of Bit-Saggil,’ which at midsummer go in procession to Bit-Zida, the ‘House of the Night,’ in order to lengthen the nights; while conversely, the ‘Daughters of Bit-Zida’ go out to Bit-Saggil to lengthen the days. Whether the different orientation of the Babylonian temples is connected with this, perhaps those Assyriologists can tell us who have visited Babylon. The ruins of Babel, or Mujélibah, are said to face the cardinal points with their sides, not with their corners; and on the other hand, the ruins of Birs-Nimroud turn their corners to the four quarters of the heavens.”

The Babylonians must have been the first to draw up a calendar, and not only this, but the first to mark the divisions of time in a systematic manner. The Greeks acknowledged that the twelve divisions of the

day were the invention of the natives of Chaldæa, and that the first instrument for recording the advance of the sun through the sky, and so dividing the time into equal sections—that is to say, the concave sun-dial with its index—was introduced into the West from the banks of the Euphrates. The system of intercalary months kept the Babylonian year almost in accordance with the progress of the sun. It is probable that the division of the lunar month into periods of seven days also originated in Babylonia, where there are indications that a sabbath, or day of rest, was observed; but these are points which require further investigation. The division of the hour into sixty minutes belongs to the sexagesimal system of notation which was peculiar to the Babylonians.

An indirect result of the systematic observation of the stars by the Babylonians was the establishment of an exact chronology among them. In the first place, the astrologers were obliged to date their observations that they might be of use to their successors; and in the second place, one of their principal objects was to connect such or such a phenomenon among the heavenly bodies with such or such an event in the life of a king. The result was that gradually lists of kings were drawn up, with the length of their reign and the principal events which happened in such and such years. Berosus, in the third century before our era, seems to have had access to a complete series of chronological records from the very beginning of history; they were, it may be presumed, those preserved among the archives of his

own Temple of Bel-Merodach: the great structure named Bit-Saggil. Modern researches have already succeeded in discovering fragments of such records. We have already considered the Assyrian lists of eponyms, first made known by George Smith. Within the last ten years lists of Babylonian kings have been brought to light. These lists give the names of the kings in proper order, and add the number of years during which each monarch reigned. The Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy, or rather Hipparchus, from whom the former derived his knowledge, must have had access to a similar list, from which the famous Ptolemaic canon was drawn up. It is now possible to compare Ptolemy's list of Babylonian kings from the time of Nabonassar (B.C. 747) downwards with the clay tablets on which it must originally have been based; and it is satisfactory to be able to convince ourselves of the absolute authenticity of a document which has until the present day been of such incalculable value to chronologists.

CHAPTER XI.

LEGAL DEEDS OF THE BABYLONIANS.

THE prophet Jeremiah describes for us the form in which deeds of sale were drawn up in his time. He says :—

“Fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

“Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord.”

Many such deeds of sale have been discovered in recent times, and are now stored up in our museums. They are, of course, written upon the ordinary writing material of the Babylonians: that is to say, upon clay tablets, such as the prophet Ezekiel speaks of:—

“Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem.”

Such plans of towns and buildings as this which was drawn upon a clay tablet by the prophet Ezekiel, have been found among the cuneiform inscriptions. Even as early as the time of Gudea, governor of Lagash, the architects traced their plans upon tablets, and this

personage himself is represented in a statue at the Louvre, already alluded to, holding such a design of a palace or fort upon his knees, with the stylus which served as his instrument to mark it out upon the clay. Plans of the city of Babylon itself, and of other towns or buildings, have also been found. When Ezekiel wrote, he was a captive in Babylonia, and naturally followed the custom of the country.

Of the deeds of sale of this period, similar in form to those described by Jeremiah, we find such examples as the following, of the time of Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and successor of the latter upon the throne of Babylon :—

“A piece of land, consisting of five measures of corn-land, a field, a meadow, and a palm-garden, adjoining the corn-field of Itri-Saktum, in front of the gate of the Sun-god, in the suburbs of Babylon. Its measurements are :

“336 $\frac{2}{3}$ cubits on the upper western side, adjoining the property of Zillâ, son of Nur-Sin ;

“339 cubits on the lower eastern side, adjoining the property of Rimut-Bel, son of Bel-uballit, son of Sin-shadunu ;

“128 cubits, 20 fingers on the upper northern side, adjoining the road. . . .

“126 cubits, 20 fingers on the lower southern side, adjoining the property of Rimut, son of Nadin, son of Sin-kudurnu.

“Total : 5 measures of corn-land and 1 measure of pasture-land.

“During the years from the 32nd year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Marduk-akhi-usur, son of Marduk-ibni, the king's officer, has held the land as pledge for three manehs of silver, at the hands of Ramman-nasir, son of Aplâ, son of the priest of Rimmon. Afterwards, in the second year of Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon, Marduk-akhi-usur, son of Marduk-ibni, the king's officer, has declared and reckoned the full value of the land as 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ manehs, 6 shekels of pure silver, and has deposited 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ shekels of silver in addition. The

total price, $3\frac{2}{3}$ manehs, 1 shekel, 3 ud of pure silver. Ramman-nasir, son of Aplâ, son of the priest of Rimmon, has received the full price of the land in silver, at the hands of Marduk-akhi-usur, son of Marduk-ibni, the king's officer.

"In the presence of the Royal Scribes, in the city of Ipkida, the tablet has been sealed, and Marduk-akhi-usur has paid the price.

"Witnesses: Bel-iddin, son of Sitillu, son of the chief architect; Nabu-etir-napshâti, son of Shamash-nâsir, son of Nur-Sin; Nabu-iddin, son of Mushallim, son of the sword-bearer; Mushezib-Marduk, son of Nabu-pal-iddin, son of Dabibi. . . .

"Besides the male witnesses of the tablet of Marduk-akhi-usur, Saggil-namrat, daughter of Ramman-nasir, and wife of Uballit-Marduk, sat as witness.

"Ramman-takul, son of Ramman-nasir, son of the priest of Rimmon, has received three shekels of stamped (?) silver at the hands of Marduk-akhi-usur, and sat together with the witnesses.

"Scribe: Nabu-shar-usur, son of Zirutu, son of Marduk-shakin-pushu.

"Babylon, month of Tammuz, 15th day, 2nd year of Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon.

"Nail-mark of Ramman-nasir, son of Aplâ, son of the Priest of Rimmon, in place of his seal."

We here see the legal process described by Jeremiah in the words quoted above, and also in another passage where the prophet says:—

"I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver.

"And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances.

"So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open:

"And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

“And I charged Baruch before them, saying,

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open ; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.”

The two copies of the tablet, the one “sealed” and the other open, would seem to refer to the Babylonian habit of enclosing some of the contract-tablets in an outer case of clay, which then received impressions of the cylindrical seals of the judges, and was marked with a few words, to indicate the nature of the document contained within. A large number of such contracts in cases are now contained in the British Museum. The contract cannot be read until the outer covering is broken. Examples have also been found of the “earthen vessels” in which legal deeds were sometimes preserved. The most remarkable of these is the large clay coffer which contained the finely-carved stone tablet from the Temple of the Sun-god at Sippara.

The system of receiving pledges would seem to have been identical among the Babylonians and among the Israelites. The latter were required by their law to show especial consideration for poor debtors in this matter :—

“When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.

“Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee.

“And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge.

“In any case, thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless

thee ; and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God."

The Babylonian contract quoted above is of the reign of Evil-Merodach. This is a king of whom we know very little. The Canon of Ptolemy gives his name and the length of his reign : namely, two years—a statement entirely confirmed by the Babylonian contracts, which are all carefully dated, with the year, the month, and the day of the month. The historian Berossus gave an account of Evil-Merodach in his Greek history of Babylonia, but, as we only know the latter through the extracts of Greek writers, not one of whom seems to have studied the work at first hand, we know little of what the learned Chaldæan priest may have said ; we only hear from Josephus that the monarch was a son of Nebuchadnezzar, that he reigned lawlessly, and that finally he was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who seized upon the throne. The Bible, however, has preserved for us an incident in the reign of Evil-Merodach, which proves that this prince had some generosity of character ; it is related both by Jeremiah and by the author of the Second Book of Kings.

"And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison,

"And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon,

"And changed his prison garments : and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life.

“And for his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.”

One of the remarkable results of the immense collection of Babylonian contracts that have been brought to England is the important aid they lend to history by the absolutely authentic chronological data which they afford. It is only recently that the great body of these documents has been made available to students through the publication of a full series of contracts, arranged according to their dates, by Father Strassmaier. In contemplating this work, the labours on Babylonian astronomy and other results of research among the cuneiform inscriptions, we are reminded of the words of Lord Bacon in the seventeenth century, only sixty-six years after the foundation of the Society, that “the Jesuits, partly in themselves and partly by the emulation and provocation of their example, have much quickened and strengthened the state of learning.” The chronological results, then, of the Babylonian contracts have confirmed in a remarkable manner the dates given by the Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy, in his Canon. It will be remembered that the Ptolemaic Canon gives the number of years during which each Babylonian king reigned, from Nabonassar (B.C. 747) to Nabonidus; then the length of the rule of the Persian kings who had conquered Babylon, from Cyrus to Darius Codomanus; then the dates of Alexander, his half-brother, his son, and his successors in the kingdom of Egypt, from Ptolemy Lagi to Cleopatra; lastly, of the Roman

emperors to Antoninus Pius. The latter part of his chronology had long ago been confirmed from manifold sources; the first portion has, as we have seen, recently been verified by the newly-discovered lists of Babylonian kings on clay tablets. That part, however, which refers to the Babylonian monarchs from Nabopolassar to Nabonidus has most remarkably been supported by the recently published contract tablets, all carefully dated, which have been found in such numbers that there is one for almost every month of the period to which reference has just been made, and often many for each month.

The names of these Babylonian months are, of course, the same which were borrowed by the Jews after the Babylonish captivity, and which we find employed in those books of the Bible that were written after that epoch: Nisan, Iyyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab, Elul, Tishri, Marchesvan, Chisleu, Tebet, Shebat, Adar.

It may easily be understood how valuable the chronological results of the contracts are for periods of which we have but little other information, as, for example, for the reign of Evil-Merodach, already spoken of. This sovereign was succeeded by his sister's husband, Neriglissar, who, as we find from the Canon of Ptolemy and from the contracts, reigned for nearly four years. The name Neriglissar is a Greek corruption of the Babylonian Nergal-shar-usur, which appears in the Bible as Nergalsharezer, the appellation of two Babylonian princes, in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar:—

“And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city [of Jerusalem] was broken up.

“And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate, even Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer, Rab-Mag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.”

It seems highly probable that this very prince, whose name appears first in the list, may have been the same who married Nebuchadnezzar's daughter, and finally succeeded Evil-Merodach upon the throne of the kingdom. The name means, “Nergal defends the king.” A certain Nergal-shar-usur, son of Belshum-ishkun, appears constantly in the deeds of the time of Evil-Merodach and Nebuchadnezzar as a personage of great importance in the State and of much wealth, whose pecuniary transactions are always carried on by means of intermediary agents; he is also thought to be the prince who afterwards, through an act of treachery already alluded to, became king of Babylon. The name of the god Nergal, which appears as an element in the name of this monarch, will be remembered as that of the divinity whose worship was introduced into Samaria by some of the foreign colonists brought into that country after its conquest by Shalmaneser and Sargon, kings of Assyria.

“Every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places, which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

“And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima.”

Nergal was the god of the infernal regions; he was

a sort of Pluto. One of the most remarkable documents found with the letters in the Babylonian language at Tell el-Amarna is a fragment of a mythological legend referring to Nergal and to his wife, Eresh-kigal, the Babylonian Proserpine. This text is very carefully spelt out in phonetic characters, and may possibly have served as a reading-book for the study of the Babylonian language among some members of the Egyptian royal family or court; or perhaps one of the North Mesopotamian princesses who were sent as wives to the Pharaoh brought it with her from her own country, where Babylonian was not the native language, but was certainly the medium of literary expression and of communication with other parts of Western Asia. The text in question is the first to show us the true pronunciation of the name of the goddess Eresh-kigal, which has hitherto been read as Nin-kigal. Eresh-kigal is her Accadian name; her Assyrian appellation is Allatu. It will be remembered that this same goddess appears as ruler of the infernal regions in the celebrated Assyrian poem known as "The Descent of Ishtar into Hades," in which the queen of the dead is represented as the implacable enemy of the goddess of love, whom she strips of her ornaments, and detains in the depths of hell until the rest of the gods release the captive divinity. In the legend discovered with the Tell el-Amarna tablets the Queen of Hades is described as entering the realm of her husband, perhaps for the first time, for she was most unkindly treated at first, after she had passed twice seven gates.

“ ‘Behold, I am Allatu!’ They seized her; they took Ereshkigal into the midst of the house. . . . They were about to strike her head against the ground. ‘Slay me not, my brother; let me speak a word!’ The god Nergal listened to her; he put forth his hand; he wept; he embraced her. ‘Be thou my husband and I will be thy wife, and will cause thee to obtain dominion over the wide earth, and will place a written tablet of wisdom in thy hand; thou shalt be lord and I will be lady.’ The god Nergal listened to her words; he embraced her, he kissed her, and wiped away her tears. ‘Whomsoever thou desirest . . . I will slay.’ ”

After the death of Neriglissar, or Nergal-sharezer, his son became king. The new monarch was a mere child, named Lâbâshi-Marduk, or, in the much corrupted form given by Josephus, Laborosoarchod. In Eusebius a more correct form is preserved: namely, Labassoarascus. This unfortunate youth is said by Berossus to have given proof that he would exhibit bad qualities as a ruler, and therefore he was assassinated, under circumstances of cruelty, by a body of conspirators. The length of his reign is stated by Josephus, quoting at second or third hand from Berossus, to have been nine months. The Canon of Ptolemy does not give his name, because for the astronomical purposes for which this list was drawn up it was useless to mention reigns that lasted for less than a year; and accordingly, we do not find Laborosoarchod any more than we meet with the Roman emperors Galba, Otho, or Vitellius, or, at an earlier epoch, with the Pseudo-Smerdis, who reigned for some months over Persia. The Babylonian contracts, however, appear to indicate that the reign of the youthful son of Neriglissar was confined to the

short space of two months, between his father's death, in the month of Nisan, and the accession of the leader of the conspirators, Nabonidus, in the month of Sivan. The seventeen years' reign of Nabonidus, the last native king of Babylon, are very fully represented by documents bearing the date of nearly every month during which he ruled.

On the disappearance of the native dynasty, the Babylonian scribes began to date their legal documents by the year of the Persian kings, whom they entitled "king of Babylon and king of the world." Thus we have a full series of such texts for the reign of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius Hystaspis. Through the chances of discovery, rather than through the actual want of inscriptions, probably still buried beneath the soil of Babylonia, few contracts of the period subsequent to Darius have at present been brought to Europe. There is a small number known, however, of the time of Xerxes: one, for instance, which refers to some corn, the property of a lady named Artim, the foster-mother or nurse of the "king's daughter," Ittakhshakh: a name possibly corresponding to Atossa, which was the appellation of the mother of Xerxes, and may, not improbably, have been also borne by his daughter or sister. We possess, moreover, a few contracts of the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus; then there is a gap in the series; but of later reigns we have a small number belonging respectively to the times of Alexander; his half-brother, Philip Arrhidæus; his son, Alexander the Younger, and some of his successors on the throne of

Syria and Babylonia: Seleucus, Antiochus, Demetrius. Finally, we arrive at the Parthian period.

Some of the Babylonian contracts bear names of kings who are at present represented by few or no other monuments; for instance, besides Evil-Merodach and Laborosoarchod, Sin-shar-ishkun, the last king of Assyria, called by Berosus Saracus, whose name appears in the following document:—

“30 talents of reeds, the property of the Sun-god, due from Shamash-epush, Bel-ibni, and Shamash-aplu. . . . They shall pay . . . as interest. In the month of Adar they shall pay their debt. They act as guarantee for one another.

“Witnesses: Nabû-bel-shanâti, son of the priest of Nana; Ikisha, son of Rabu, son of Addaru; . . . son of the Smith. Scribe: Kidini, son of the Smith.

“Sippara, month of Sivan, 25th day, 2nd year of Sin-shar-ishkun, king of Assyria.”

The predecessor of Saracus, Ashur-etil-ili, son of Sardanapalus, also appears in some contracts recently discovered during the American excavations at Niffer, on the site of the ancient Babylonian city of Nippur.

These contracts that have been described are all of comparatively late date; but there actually exist a number of far more ancient documents of the same class. The British Museum possesses a large number of such texts, bearing the date of various years in the reign of Khammurabi, king of Babylon, identified, although without certainty, with Amraphel, king of Shinar, who, in company with Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, fought against Abraham in the land of Canaan. The epoch of Khammurabi must be set about B.C.

2200 ; he reigned, as Nabonidus tells us in an inscription already quoted, seven hundred years before Burnaburyash, some of whose letters are found among the Tell el-Amarna tablets.

Let us examine some of the contents of the Babylonian law-deeds. A sale of land has already been quoted, drawn up, according to Jeremiah's description, with the names of the witnesses and the impressions of the seals of the judges. The seller of the land, according to a very common custom, made the impression of his nail in the damp clay, instead of stamping it with his seal ; such nail-marks are constantly seen in these legal deeds on the edge of the tablet, where they form a semicircular indentation. The names of women rarely appear as witnesses, but in this case there is one, who is described as sitting in court, to add her testimony to the proceedings.

The Babylonians measured land by reeds and cubits, and these were the measures used by the Jews at the time of the captivity. Ezekiel says :—

“Behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth ; so he measured the breadth of the building one reed, and the height one reed.”

After this, Ezekiel gives all the measurements of the temple and of its court in reeds and cubits. These are the same measurements that we find in the Babylonian contracts : only in the latter the reed is equivalent to seven cubits. The following document refers to a sale of land :—

“Four reeds, one cubit, eight fingers [of land], the property of Marduk-shakin-shum, son of Marduk-shum-usur, son of Shigua, worth $2\frac{1}{2}$ manehs, $1\frac{1}{2}$ shekel of silver, according to the valuation; together with 10 garments and 2 reeds $6\frac{2}{3}$ cubits [of land], the property of Kurbanni-Marduk, son of Sazutu, son of Dakhar, worth $1\frac{2}{3}$ maneh, $7\frac{1}{2}$ shekels, are sold to Nergal-shar-usur, son of Bel-shum-iskun, for their full price: namely, $2\frac{1}{2}$ manehs, $1\frac{1}{2}$ shekel of silver, to Marduk-shakin-shum, as the price of his land, and $1\frac{2}{3}$ maneh, $7\frac{1}{2}$ shekels of silver, to Kurbanni-Marduk, as the price of his land. By the direction of Nergal-shar-usur, the money has been paid by Nabu-akhi-iddin, son of Gulâ, son of Egibi.

“Witnesses: Nabu-aplu-iddin, son of Itti-Marduk-balatu, son of Shanashishu; Rimut-Bel-ilâni, son of Nabu-kishir, son of Zazakku; Nabu-belshunu, son of Bel-akhi-irba, son of Ukkai.

“Scribe: Damuk, son of Rimut-Bel, son of the Ashlaku.

“Babylon, month of Tebet, 9th day, 1st year of Evil-Merodach, King of Babylon.”

Many of these legal documents contain the enumeration of the objects given as dowries on the occasion of a marriage, and are, in fact, marriage settlements. Money, land, slaves, and property in other forms were given by the Babylonians, with their daughters, to their sons-in-law, as we see in the following case:—

“Marduk-shar-usur, son of Nabu-etir, of his free will gives 5 manehs of silver, 3 slaves, 30 sheep, two oxen, and the rent of a house, with his daughter, Hibta, as dowry, to Nabu-bani-ziru, son of Bel-uballit, son of Danniâ. Nabu-bani-ziru has received the dowry at the hands of Marduk-shar-usur.

“Witnesses: Kudur, son of . . . son of Diki; Mushezib-Marduk, son of Aplâ, son of the priest of Adar; Siriktum, son of Ith-Marduk-Balatu, son of Sin-damik.

“Scribe: Nabu-zir-irasshi, son of Nabu-nasir, son of Bel-aplu-usur.

“Babylon, month of Elul, 6th day, 1st year of Neriglissar, king of Babylon.”

In other documents we see certificates of betrothal

or marriage, as in the following, in which the king, Neriglissar, seems to have promised his daughter to a priest attached to the great temple of Bit-Zida—the “Tower of Babel”—as we have seen above. The tablet is unfortunately mutilated :—

“Nabu-shum-ukin, priest of Nebo, keeper (?) of the Temple of Bit-Zida, son of Shiriktum, son of Isde-ilani-danan, says to Neriglissar, king of Babylon: ‘Give thy virgin daughter, Gizitum, in marriage; let her be my wife.’ Neriglissar, king of Babylon [says] to Nabu-shum-ukin, priest of Nebo, keeper of the Temple of Bit-Zida. . . .

“[Witnesses : . . .] son of Nabu-iddin . . . son of Nabu-shar-usur, the judge.

“Scribe: Nabu-shum, son of Ina. . . .

“Babylon, month of Nisan, 1st day, 1st year of Neriglissar, king of Babylon.”—Copy of the Temple of Bit-Zida.

We have already observed that slaves were sometimes given as part of a dowry, and many others of the Babylonian contracts refer to the sale of slaves, and illustrate the manner in which this class of persons were dealt with on the banks of the Euphrates. For example :—

“Belilitum, daughter of Bel-ushezib, son of Shanashishu, of her own free will, sells Bazuzu her slave for $\frac{1}{2}$ maneh, 5 shekels of silver, being the full price, to Nabu-akhi-iddin, son of Shula, son of Egibi, subject to the chances of escape, legal complaints, compulsory royal service, and adoption, which may occur to Bazuzu. Etillu, son of Balatsu, son of Dannia, acts as guarantee for Belilitum; the one is responsible for the other.

“Witnesses: Naid-Bel, son of Shamash-akh-iddin, son of Nabu-scheme; Bel-akhi-iddin, son of Takis-Gula, son of Sigua; Sakin-duppa, son of Marduk-nasir, son of the priest of the God.

“Scribe: Bel-kasir, son of Bel-rimanni, son of Babutu.

"Babylon, month of Ab, 3rd day, 1st year of Neriglissar, king of Babylon."

Sometimes a whole family of slaves are sold together; and this would lead us to suppose that the Babylonians were more humane in their treatment of these living articles of commerce than some modern nations, which were in the habit of parting husbands from their wives and mothers from their children when it was more profitable to sell them separately. Ardiya sold Nabudinu-epush, with his wife and daughter, to another for the price of two-thirds of a maneh, or forty shekels; and in the following document we read of another family who were sold together. Their owner was the son of a priest; and this is one among many proofs of the wealth of the ministers of the gods in ancient Chaldæa.

"Bel-akhi-iddin and Nabu-akhi-bullit, sons of Saggil-shum-ibni, son of Sin-damaku, and Rimat, their mother, daughter of Shuzubu, son of the priest of the shrine, of their own free-will, sell Nabu-edu-usur, Banitum-umma, his wife, Kisrinni and Gimilinni: in all four slaves, for 2 manehs of silver, being the full price, to Nabu-akhi-iddin, son of Shulâ, son of Egibi, subject to the chances of escape, legal complaint, and adoption of the slaves as sons or daughters.

"The sellers guarantee one another.

"Witnesses: Nabu-bani-akhu, son of Shuzubu, son of the priest of the shrine; . . . , son of Marduk-nasir, son of the priest of the god; Marduk-ikisanni, son of Baniya, son of Kassadi; Tabik-ziru, son of Nergal-ushallim, son of Sin-karabi-isme; Bel-iddin, son of Bel-ushallim, son of the priest of Zariku; Ramman-ibni, son of Zariku-zir-ibni, son of the priest of Zariku.

"Scribe: Rimut, son of Nabu-shum-ishkun, son of. . .

"Babylon, month of Elul, 16th day, year of accession of Neriglissar, king of Babylon."

It will be noticed that the adoption of slaves as sons is spoken of in these deeds of sale. This usage has been thought to correspond to the Israelitish custom of adopting slaves, who were called "sons of the house," * as in Jeremiah ii. 14. The Babylonian slaves could also own property, as we see from the following document, among others:—

"2 shekels' weight of silver, the property of Nabu-kin-akhu, the slave, son of Iddin-Marduk, are lent to Rimut, son of Nirgal-shum-iddin. He shall repay the principal of the silver. . . .

"Witnesses: Sula, son of Bel-zir-ibni; Kidini, son of Ramman-magubbu.

"Babylon, month of Tammuz, 15th day, 1st year of Neriglissar, king of Babylon."

We have spoken of the wealth of the priests, and many of the Babylonian contracts which come from Sippara bear witness to the large property possessed by the great Temple of the Sun-god in that city, to which allusion has been made in the last chapter. The property is represented as belonging to the god himself. It must have consisted largely of land, which was farmed out, a portion of the produce being regularly paid to the priests, as we see in this text:—

"Shamash-namir, son of Dihummu, swears by Bel, Nebo, the Sun-god Nergal, and the laws of Neriglissar, king of Babylon, to Nabu-balatu-eresh, the custodian of the Temple of the Sun-god: 'When the month of Iyyar is ended, I will pay to thee the portions of corn which are due from me, and the remainder I will procure (?) and pay to thee in the month of Tishri.'

"Witnesses: Nabu-naid, son of Bel-epush, son of Mushezib;

* See "*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*," Vol. V., p. 27.

Balatu, son of Irba ; Khar-ibni, son of Bel-piya-ukin, the priest ; Shamash-našir, son of Siriktum, son of the Fowler.

“ Sippara, month of Tebet, 10th day, 2nd year of Neriglissar, king of Eridu.”

We know how much use the ancient and the modern Babylonians have made of the fruit of the palm-tree, both for food and drink ; consequently, dates are one of the forms of produce that were most frequently paid by the tenants of the Sun-god.

“ Dates fully ripe the property of the Sun-god, paid by Shugubbu to the Temple of the Sun-god.

“ Month of Tebet, 4th day, 2nd year of Neriglissar, king of Babylon.”

Besides the fruit of their own land, the Babylonian priests received the payment of tithe as regularly as the Jewish priests.

“ Dates, in payment of tithe, delivered by Nadin to the Temple of the Sun-god.

“ Month of Chisleu, 28th day, accession year of Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon.”

Sometimes we catch a glimpse of the mode in which the priests employed their wealth. The temples of sun-dried or partly of kiln-baked bricks were often falling into ruin and had to be restored ; it was especially important to keep the lofty tower, from which the observations of the stars were made, in good condition.

“ 3 shekels of silver, from the treasury of Gula, are paid to the Temple of the Sun-god, for the work of the Tower.

“ In the presence of Mushezib-Marduk, son of Nabu-nibshari.

“ Month of Tishri, 3rd day, 2nd year of Neriglissar, king of Babylon.”

Many of the contracts refer to the sales of houses or to the rent due for them from the tenant to the owner. For instance :—

“4 manehs of silver, the property of Shum-usur, son of Nur-ea, son of Mastukku, are due from Tabik-ziru, son of Marduk-usur, son of Da-Marduk. For his house which adjoins . . . , and also adjoins the house of Rimut-Bel, son of Zirya, son of Misirai, and the house of Zirya, son of Bel'eteru, the rent is wanting; the weight of silver is wanting; the house has been in the possession of Iddin-akhu as a pledge for 3 years. The bare places on the walls shall be renewed, the cracks shall be filled up. After 3 years, silver to the amount of 4 manehs shall be paid by Tabik-ziru to Iddin-akhu, and the latter shall quit the house; the rent of the chamber of the servant shall also be brought by Tabik-Ziru: every door that Iddin-akhu has brought into the house of Tabik-ziru shall be taken out.

“Witnesses: Marduk-kin-aplu, son of Kiribtu, son of Da-Marduk, Lábâshi, son of Nabu-nasir, son of Abi-ul-idi; Nabu-etir, son of Nurea, son of Mastukku, the priest of Nabu-sabik-ilani, son of Nabu-kin-aplu, son of Da-Marduk.

“Babylon, month of Ab, 4th day, 2nd year of Evil-Merodach, King of Babylon.”

Or again :—

“The house of Nabu-shum-ukin, son of Shamash-shakin-shum, which he has built upon the land of Nabu-bel-shanâti. On the east is a house; in front of it is a house; on the side is a house. It, with its courtyard, is let to Sikkuti, daughter of Bel-ushallim, for a habitation, according to the tablet, at the yearly rent of $2\frac{1}{2}$ shekels of silver.

“She shall repair the breaches and renew the bare places.

“At the beginning of the year she shall pay half the rent; at the end of the year she shall pay the rest.

“Witnesses: Bel-usallim, son of Nabu-irassi, son of Ramman-samme; Rimut, son of Nirgal-uballit, son of the Potter.

“Scribe: Apla, son of Nabu-shum-iskun.

“Sippara, month of Tebet, 20th day, 1st year of Neriglissar, King of Babylon.”

In this last document we have an example of a house let to a tenant who is bound to keep it in repair; she makes the agreement to restore the dilapidated brick-work and to renew the fallen plaster on the walls. At the present day a heavy fall of rain will often do much damage to an Oriental house, built after the manner of the native architects.

The system of mortgages was general among the Babylonians :—

“12 manehs of silver, the property of the king’s son, lent, through Nabu-sabit-kata, the majordomo of the king’s son, to Shum-ukin, son of Mushallim-ilu. In the month of Nisan he shall pay back the principal of the silver to the amount of 12 manehs. His whole property in town and country is mortgaged to the King’s son. No other creditor shall make claims upon this until the debtor has delivered the silver to Nabu-sabit-kata. Nabu-akhi-iddin, son of Sula, son of Egibi, guarantees the payment of the silver.

“Witnesses : Shamash-uballit, son of Ikisa ; Kalba, son of Bel-eresh.

“Scribe : Bel-Akhi-ikisa, son of Bel-etir.

“Babylon, month of Elul, 10th day, 2nd year of Neriglissar, King of Babylon.”

Many of the Babylonian contracts refer to money lent at interest. For instance :—

“ $2\frac{2}{3}$ manehs, 6 shekels of silver, the property of Nabu-shum-usur, son of Marduk, son of Epesh-ilu, are lent to Nabu-akhi-iddin, son of Sula, son of Egibi.

“Every month he shall pay as interest upon [this money] one shekel per maneh.

“Witnesses : Marduk . . . , son of Baniya, son of Marduk . . . ; Mushezib-Marduk, son of Kudur, son of. . .

“Scribe : Nabu-akhi-iddin, son of Sula, son of Egibi.

“Babylon, month of Marchesvan, 30th day, 1st year of Neriglissar, King of Babylon.”

But perhaps the largest number of the Babylonian contracts are simply bills, containing receipts or not. The articles which have most frequently been found recorded up to the present time as bought and sold by the merchants of Babylon are corn, vegetables, sesame, dates—occasionally palm-wine or oil. Many lists of objects have been found which formed part of the property of a temple, or were given to it as tribute. Sometimes these are animals for sacrifice, or food for the maintenance of priests and workmen, or woven stuffs. Many lists of amounts of wool and metal are found which were handed over to workmen for the purpose of manufacture.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE BABYLONIAN MONARCHY.

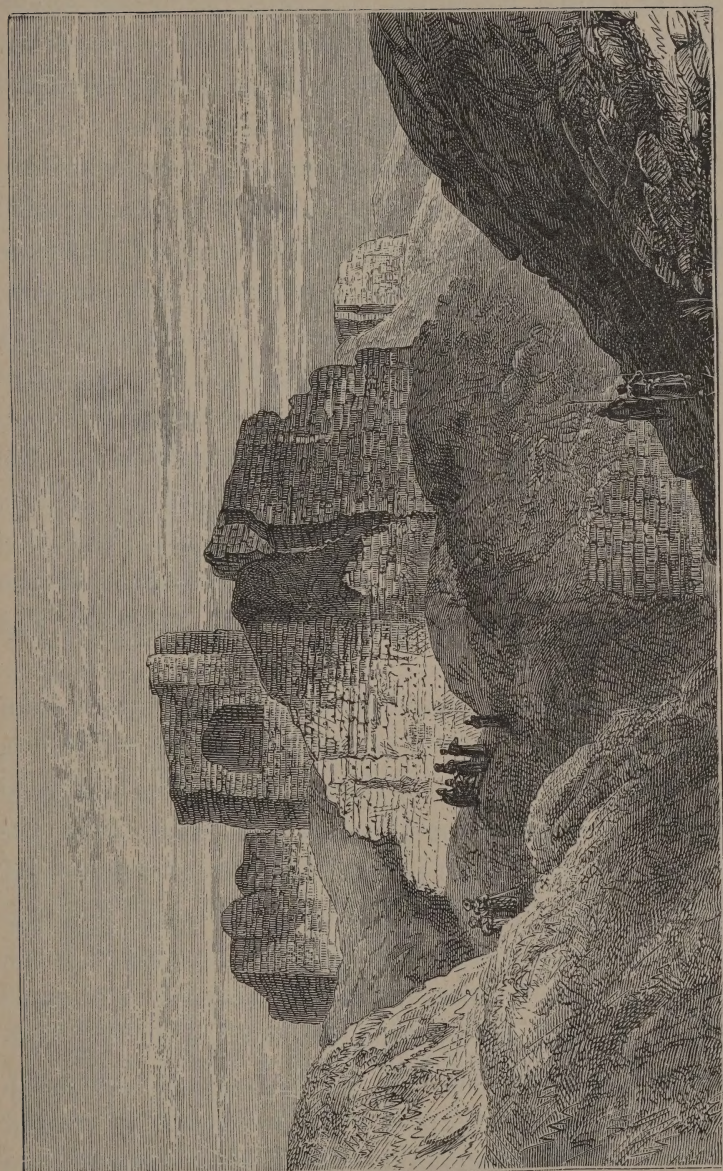
UNDOUBTEDLY, one of the important results already obtained from the study of the native chronicles of Babylon is the establishment, on grounds apart from the question of the authenticity of the Book of Daniel, of the historical character of Belshazzar. The name of this prince had always been a puzzle to commentators and historians. The only native authority on Babylonian history—Berosus—did not appear to have mentioned such a person, so far as could be gathered from the second or third-hand quotations of Greek writers, such as the Jew Josephus and the Christian Eusebius: both anxious to confirm the accuracy of the Book of Daniel.

According to the extracts from the work of Berosus preserved for us in the writings of these authors, the following is the history of the last King of Babylon. His name was Nabonidus, or Nabonnedus, and he first appears as the leader of a band of conspirators who determined to bring about a change in the government. The throne was then occupied by the youthful Laborsarchod (for this is the corrupt Greek form of the Babylonian Lâbâshi-Marduk), who was the son of Neriglissar,

and therefore, through his mother, the grandson of the great Nebuchadnezzar; but, in spite of his tender age, the new sovereign, who had only succeeded his father two months before, had already given proof of a bad disposition. We are not told, in these very probably imperfect extracts from Berosus, whether Nabonidus was connected, by marriage or otherwise, with the reigning house, as the Book of Daniel and Herodotus would have us believe; we are simply informed that he took the lead in the plot laid against the life of Laborosoarchod, and that when the designs of the conspirators had been carried out, they appointed Nabonidus king in the room of the youthful son of Neriglissar. The love of building shown by the new sovereign—of which we possess so many proofs in the cuneiform inscriptions describing his restoration of ancient temples—is reflected in the statement of Berosus that in this reign the embankment along the River Euphrates was constructed of bricks and bitumen. We next hear that in the seventeenth year of Nabonidus, Cyrus, who had already conquered the rest of Asia, marched upon Babylon. The native forces met the Persians in battle, but were put to flight, with their king at their head, and took refuge behind the ramparts of Borsippa. Cyrus thereupon entered Babylon, we are told, and threw down her walls. The last statement, however, we cannot believe, since there is no allusion to such a proceeding in the cuneiform inscriptions; and in the time of Darius we find the walls still standing, until the latter king destroyed them in part, as a punishment for the rebellion of which the inhabitants of the

city had been guilty. After Cyrus had thus taken possession of the capital, Nabonidus surrendered himself to the conqueror. The captive monarch was kindly treated, and life was granted to him on condition that he would consent to reside in the province of Carmania, at a distance from his own country; it was in that region that he died.

The historian Herodotus—although his account of the conquests of Cyrus is in many respects so full—says little about the affairs of Babylonia at the time of the Persian invasion. He tells us, however, that the name of the native sovereign who was overcome by the great conqueror was Labynetus, and this is evidently the same name as Nabonidus, or Nabonnedus. Labynetus, says Herodotus, was not only the name borne by the last native king of Babylon, but it was also that of his father, the prince who, many years before, had made a treaty with the Lydians, and whose wife, Nitocris, had done much to beautify the capital city. This earlier Labynetus of Herodotus is evidently Nebuchadnezzar, whose name, indeed, begins with the same element as Nabonidus—that is to say, the name of the god Nebo. The works which Herodotus attributes to Nitocris were in reality those of her husband, Labynetus or Nebuchadnezzar—if, indeed, this princess be an historical personage at all. It is interesting, however, that Herodotus states that the last king of Babylon was the son of the great Nebuchadnezzar—to give that monarch his true name—for in so doing he bears out, so far as his testimony is of any value, the words of the



THE KASR, OR RUINS OF THE PALACE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AT BABYLON.

Book of Daniel, which not only calls Belshazzar son of Nebuchadnezzar, but also introduces the wife of the latter monarch as being the mother of the ill-fated prince who closed the long line of native rulers.

Such being the only testimony of secular writers, there was no alternative but to identify Belshazzar with Nabonidus or Labynetus, the last king of Babylon, according to the extracts from Berosus, whose history, it must be repeated, does not seem to have been actually seen by any of the authors of ancient works now extant. Berosus was, in this particular, borne out by the celebrated Canon of Ptolemy, already spoken of, the accuracy of which there was every reason to believe. Yet the name Nabonidus stood in no sort of relation to that of Belshazzar; and the identification of the two personages was, undoubtedly, both arbitrary and difficult.

The cuneiform inscriptions brought to Europe from the site of Babylon and other ancient cities of Chaldæa soon changed the aspect of the problem. The historical extracts, given by Josephus and Eusebius, from the annals composed by the priests of Bel, were indeed fully confirmed, and the Canon of Ptolemy retained its reputation for accuracy. Nabonidus, or, in the native form, Nabu-naïd, that is to say, "Nebo exalts," is the name given to the last native king of Babylon in the contemporary records inscribed on clay. This monarch, however, was found to speak of his eldest son as bearing the very name preserved in the Book of Daniel, and hitherto known to us from that source alone. The

following is one of the inscriptions in which the name occurs ; it was discovered in four copies inscribed on clay cylinders, which were in receptacles constructed to contain them at the four corners of the platform which supported the great temple of the Moon-god, at Mukeyyer—identified, as we have already seen, with Ur of the Chaldees. This temple is one of the many sanctuaries restored by Nabonidus :—

“I am Nabonidus, king of Babylon, maintainer of the temples of Bit-Saggil and Bit-Zida, worshipper of the great gods.

“The temples of . . . , the tower of Egish-shir-gal, in the city of Ur, were built but not completed, by Ur-Uk, the ancient king ; Dungi, his son, completed his work. I found it recorded in the inscriptions of Ur-Uk and of Dungi his son, that Ur-Uk had built that tower but had not completed it ; and that Dungi, his son, had completed his work.

“In my days that temple had become old. Upon the ancient foundation which Ur-Uk and Dungi, his son, had built, I undertook to erect that tower anew with bricks and bitumen,* as in former times ; and I founded it and built it to the glory of the Moon-god, Lord of the gods of heaven and earth, king of the gods, god of the gods who inhabit the great heavens, lord of the temple of E-gish-shir-gal, in the city of Ur.

“O Moon-god, lord of the gods, king of the gods of heaven and earth, god of the gods who inhabit the great heavens ; when thou enterest joyfully into this temple, may a blessing for the temples of thy great godhead, Bit-Saggil, Bit-Zida, and E-gish-shir-gal, be upon thy lips ; and set the fear of thy great godhead in the hearts of the people, that they may not sin against thy great godhead. Let the foundations of the temples stand firm, like the heavens.

“Save me, Nabonidus, who am king of Babylon, from sinning against thy great godhead, and give me a life of long days, as a gift.

*Or “slime,” as the Authorised Version says, in the account of the building of the Tower of Babel.

“Set the fear of thy great godhead in the heart of Belshazzar, my firstborn son, my own offspring ; and let him not commit sin, in order that he may enjoy the fulness of life.”

The name which the Hebrew writer gives us in the form Belshazzar is, in its native Babylonian form, Belshar-usur, and signifies “Bel protects the king.” It occurs also in some of the legal deeds of the reign of Nabonidus. A passage, resembling that just quoted, is found in a longer inscription of the same period, also discovered among the ruins of Ur; but the clay cylinder is mutilated at that particular part where the words referring to Belshazzar are written. We are able to see, however, that Nabonidus is here concluding his prayer to the Moon-god with a similar petition in favour of his firstborn son :—

“Belshazzar, my firstborn son . . . lengthen his days ; let him not commit sin. . . .”

These passages provide us, in an unexpected manner, with the name which had hitherto been known from the Book of Daniel, and from that document alone ; but we were still in the dark as to the reason which could have induced the author to represent Belshazzar as king of Babylon. The prince was indeed the eldest son of his father, but there was no occasion for inferring from the Babylonian records that he ever became king or exercised kingly power. On the contrary, the cylinder from Babylon, bearing a record of Cyrus, which was discovered in 1880, harmonised with the statements of Berosus in showing that Nabonidus was the monarch whom the Persians overthrew ; some lines from this

document have already been quoted above in the history of the ruin of the great city, in order to show in what manner the conqueror was received by his new subjects. A few more words may be cited here :—

“I am Cyrus, king of multitudes, the great king, the mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Shumir and Accad, king of the four regions [that is to say, the four quarters of the world, north, south, east, and west], son of Cambyeses, the great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Teispes, the great king, king of Anshan, the eternal seed of the kingdom, whose rule is favoured by Bel and Nebo, whose lordship is desired by them for the joy of their hearts.

“When I entered in peace into Babylon, I joyfully took up my abode in the royal palace.

“My far-extending armies spread themselves out peacefully through the city of Babylon. I allowed no adversary to trouble the men of Shumir and Accad ; I provided for their welfare in Babylon and in all their cities.

“All the kings who dwell in all the regions from the upper sea to the lower sea [that is to say, from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf], the kings of Syria . . . brought their heavy tribute, and kissed my feet within the city of Babylon.

“The gods of Shumir and Accad, whom Nabonidus, in spite of the wrath of the lord of the gods, had taken away to Shuanna, I restored to their places by the command of Merodach, the lord of the gods, and placed them in seats that delighted their hearts.

“May all the gods whom I have restored to their own cities daily announce before Bel and Nebo the length of my days, and pronounce words of blessing upon me.”

Nabonidus, then, was the last king of Babylon, and was overthrown by Cyrus, in accordance with the account of Berosus and the allusion of Herodotus.

In 1882 a cuneiform inscription was for the first time interpreted and published by Mr. Pinches ; it had been disinterred among the ruins of Babylon by Mr. Hormuzd Rassam. This document proved to contain the annals of the king whose fate we have just been



SOLITARY TAMARISK-TREE AMONG THE RUINS OF THE PALACE OF BABYLON.

discussing—namely, Nabonidus. Though mutilated in parts, it allowed us to learn some portions of his history, both before and during the invasion of Babylonia by Cyrus ; and one of the most remarkable facts that it added to our knowledge was that of the regency—if that term may be used—of the king's son, during the absence of the sovereign from the Court and army. Here, surely, the explanation of the Book of Daniel was

found : Belshazzar was, at the time of the irruption of the Persians, acting as his father's representative ; he was commanding the Babylonian army and presiding over the Babylonian Court. When Cyrus entered Babylon, doubtless the only resistance he met with was in the royal palace, and there it was probably slight. In the same night Belshazzar was taken and slain ; perhaps he was betrayed to the conqueror by the disaffected soldiers.

In the sixth year of Nabonidus, we are told by his native chronicler in the document discovered as we have just seen, the Persians captured the chief city of Media—Ecbatana, called in the Book of Ezra Achmetha—where, since Cyrus had made it one of his own capitals, a roll containing his decree concerning the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem was found many years later. These are the words of the Book of Ezra :—

“Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon.

“And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written :

“In the first year of Cyrus the king, the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem.”

“The first year of Cyrus” means his first year as King of Babylon, according to a system of dating which was followed in the legal deeds of his reign found among the cuneiform inscriptions. Whether the decree in question was written with cuneiform characters, or whether the scribes of the Achæmenian monarchs employed another

form of writing for documents on parchment, and reserved the wedge-shaped letters for clay and stone, we do not at present know.

The conquest of Ecbatana was the beginning of that vast accumulation of treasure by the Persian kings which afterwards excited the astonishment of the Macedonians under Alexander the Great. In the treasury of the Median monarchs Cyrus found the remains of the immense wealth which had been seized at the capture of Nineveh, and carried away, as we have seen in a former chapter, to the Median capital. The riches which Sardanapalus had hoarded in the cellars* of his palace by the Tigris, "the silver and gold, and the pleasant furniture," were now captured for a second time by a nation of needy shepherds, and led to the entire alteration of their manners and morals.

Ecbatana was conquered in the sixth year of Nabonidus, and therefore eleven years before Cyrus captured the city of Babylon and became ruler of the Jews. Let us see how the events of this year are noted in the chronicle discovered in 1882:—

"The troops of Astyages [King of Media] revolted against him; he was captured and delivered up to Cyrus. Cyrus marched to Ecbatana, the royal city. The silver, gold, and other goods of Ecbatana were carried away as booty, and brought to the land of Anshan.

"In the seventh year, the king [Nabonidus] was in the city of Tema. The king's son, the great men, and his troops, were in the land of Accad. The king did not come to Babylon in the month of

* Herodotus, ii. 150.

Nisan ; the god Nebo did not come to Babylon ; Bel did not come forth ; the festivals were not kept. Sacrifices were offered to the gods of Babylon and Borsippa in the temples of Bit-Saggil and Bit-Zida."

These lines explain the disaffection of the priests and people towards their king, which was also alluded to by Cyrus in his inscription quoted above. The ordinary religious rites—consecrated, without doubt, by the usage of immemorial antiquity—were not carried on, through the negligence or heresy of the monarch. Especial allusion would seem to be made to the omission of the customary festivals and of the processions, in which the images of the gods were carried, in the manner represented in a well-known bas-relief from the ruins of Nineveh. According to the cylinder of Cyrus, and to a passage in the chronicle which will presently be quoted, images of the divinities had also been taken away from their respective temples by the unpopular monarch, who, through his conduct in this respect, seems to have brought about the ruin of his own dynasty.

The words which bear on the subject of Belshazzar, however, are those that tell us that the "king's son was with the great men and with his troops"—that is to say, that he was taking the place in the Court and in the army that should have been held by his father. It may be that the passion for restoring the ancient temples of the country—to which several inscriptions from which quotations have been given in former chapters bear witness—led Nabonidus to neglect his

other duties as king and as high priest. A similar state of affairs is described as existing in the ninth year of the reign :—

“Ninth year. Nabonidus the king was in the city of Tema. The king’s son, the great men, and the troops were in the land of Accad. The king did not come to Babylon in the month of Nisan. Nebo did not come to Babylon ; Bel did not come forth ; the festivals were neglected.

“ On the fifth of Nisan, the king’s mother died in the town of Durkarâshu, on the banks of the Euphrates, above Sippara. The king’s son and the troops mourned for three days ; there was weeping ; in the month of Sivan there was weeping in the land of Accad . . . for the king’s mother. In the month of Nisan, Cyrus, king of Persia, summoned his troops ; he crossed the Tigris below Arbela.”

The festivals and religious rites which especially fell into neglect through the absence of Nabonidus seem to have been those of the new year : those which should have been celebrated in Nisan, the first month of the Babylonian calendar, coinciding with the latter half of March and the first half of April. During the tenth and eleventh years of the reign, the same condition of religious and political matters is described ; and after that the tablet on which the chronicle is written is unfortunately broken.

On the other side of the tablet, however, we find some details of the invasion and conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus. We have here reached the end of Nabonidus’ reign of seventeen years.

“In the month of Tammuz, Cyrus gave battle to the troops of Accad, and the men of Accad made a rebellion ; a slaughter took

place. On the 14th day Sippara was captured without fighting. Nabonidus fled. On the 16th, Gobryas, governor of Gutium, and the troops of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting. Afterwards, Nabonidus was surrounded and captured in Babylon.

"In the month of Marchesvan, on the third day, Cyrus entered into Babylon. . . . He gave peace to the city. Cyrus announced peace to all Babylon. He set Gobryas, his officer, as officer in Babylon. From the month of Chisleu to the month of Adar, the gods of Accad, which Nabonidus had carried down to Babylon, returned to their own cities.

"The wife of the king died. From the 27th day of Adar to the 3rd Nisan [that is to say, for a week] there was weeping in Accad. All the people gashed their heads."

This is all that we have been able to learn from the cuneiform inscriptions about the destruction of the native Babylonian dynasty, and the Persian conquest of the ancient kingdom. The materials at our disposal are even now of the most scanty character; if only the mounds of Babylon were fully excavated, what might we not expect to find? All our doubts about this obscure period of history might be cleared up. All the records which the Babylonians kept with so much care, and wrote upon such imperishable material, might be discovered.

The records hitherto found that refer to Nabonidus give us details of some of the restorations of ancient temples in which he delighted. Some of these have already been spoken of. In Sippara Nabonidus restored the great Temples of the Sun and Moon. The Temple of the Sun had been originally founded by Naram-Sin, who, as Nabonidus himself tells us, reigned about B.C.

3750. Nabonidus sent, like all the royal builders of Assyria and Babylonia, to Phœnicia for cedars from Lebanon and Amanus for the re-building of the ancient sanctuaries. Even Gudea, governor of Lagash, had, as we have seen, brought timber from the same distant region for the construction of his temples. The want of wood in Babylonia has always driven the natives to import it from other parts, and perhaps was one of the inducements which led the kings of the regions watered by the Euphrates and the Tigris to the perpetual succession of invasions from which Phœnicia suffered, from the time of the early Sargon to that of Nebuchadnezzar. It will be remembered that Alexander the Great conceived the idea of building ships on the shores of the Persian Gulf and keeping a navy in those waters; but he was forced for the purpose to procure the firs and cedars of Lebanon, after he had cut down the few cypresses that the gardens of Babylonia were able to furnish. The cedar-beams employed in the palaces of Nineveh have been discovered by modern explorers, and fragments may be seen in our museums: proofs of the power of the Assyrian kings and the unlimited command over human labour which they possessed. The same must be said of the Persian monarchs, who roofed the palaces of Susa and Persepolis with cedars of Lebanon, dragged to their destination over mountains and across rivers, for many hundreds of miles.

Gold and silver were employed by Nabonidus in the adornment of the temples, which were made, according to the expression of the royal builder, to "shine like

the day." Doors of cedar, bound with bronze, led into the interior of the sanctuary. Nabonidus put up inscriptions to record what he had done ; and, above all, he was careful to restore to their places the inscriptions of his royal predecessors, anointing them with oil, and sacrificing victims, according to the prescribed rites, in order to avert the curses which would otherwise fall upon his head.

Besides the great Temple of the Sun, there was a Temple of the Moon at Sippara. This Nabonidus was commanded in a vision by the god Merodach to restore, towards the beginning of his reign. "O Nabonidus, king of Babylon," said the deity, "bring bricks with the horses of thy chariots, build the temple, and let the Moon-god, the great lord, take up his abode therein." At this time, however, the Scythians had invaded the dominions of Babylon, and Nabonidus feared that they would prevent the design of restoration from being carried out. But Cyrus, who was then only prince of Anshan, and a vassal of the Babylonian monarch, defeated the Scythians, and the danger was averted.

The Temple of the Moon had been founded in the ninth century before Christ by Shalmaneser, son of Ashur-nasir-pal, so well known to us from the bas-reliefs from Nimroud now in the British Museum ; and had afterwards been restored by Ashur-bani-pal, or Sardanapalus. Nabonidus, however, beautified and strengthened its walls more than his fathers had done. At the ceremony of laying the new foundations on the old site the stones were sprinkled with palm-wine,

grape-wine, oil, and honey. The images of the gods were brought into the newly-restored temple with much rejoicing.

Besides the temples of Sippara, Nabonidus kept the great temples of Bit-Saggil and Bit-Zida, in Babylon and Borsippa, in repair. He also, as we have already seen, restored the Temple of the Moon at Ur. At Agane there was a sanctuary that had existed there since the days of Sargon and Naram-Sin, who had made that city their capital in times of remote antiquity. This building was restored by Nabonidus with the same care as the others, and here he found the ancient inscription of Shagashaltiyash, who reigned over Babylon about B.C. 1500, and who had executed works upon this structure. Another famous shrine restored by the last king of Babylon was the Temple of the Sun at Larsa—a city represented by the modern Senkereh—where an inscription of Burraburyash, the king whose letters are to be read among the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, was found by the royal builder.

Such was the activity of the ill-fated Nabonidus in repairing the ancient and famous dwellings of the gods, which towered above the walls of the chief cities of his kingdom; yet he did not succeed in retaining the favour of the priests, who, apparently because he neglected some customary rites, ceased to support their native sovereign, and gladly welcomed the arrival of the invader, Cyrus.

CHAPTER XIII.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCOVERIES OF RECENT YEARS.

FOR many years after the first decipherment of the Assyrian inscriptions there was a difficulty in the identification of the Assyrian monarch Pul, who, according to the Second Book of Kings, invaded Samaria in the reign of Menahem. The latter prince, in order to win the friendship of the Assyrians, paid to Pul a heavy tribute, consisting of a thousand talents of silver, which he exacted from the wealthy men of the land, forcing each of them to contribute fifty talents; and, after receiving this sum, the king of Assyria returned to his own country. Menahem was succeeded on the throne of Israel by his son, Pekahiah, who, after a reign of two years, was assassinated by Pekah, a captain of his army, and this usurper seized upon the royal power. In the reign of Pekah the Assyrians again invaded Israel under Tiglath-Pileser, who took many cities, and carried away the inhabitants, according to the custom of that time. Pekah was, in his turn, assassinated by Hoshea, who was at first the servant of the Assyrian monarch, and paid him tribute, but after a time acted treacherously towards his suzerain, and intrigued with the king of Egypt, until this conduct brought upon him the ven-

geance of the Assyrians, and finally led to the destruction of the kingdom of Samaria. Tiglath-Pileser was also brought into relation with the kingdom of Judah, for Ahaz purchased his friendship by large gifts.

The name of Tiglath-Pileser was soon discovered among the Assyrian records disinterred by Sir H. Layard in the palace at Nimroud—the ancient Halah, or Calah, where bas-reliefs were also found representing some of the incidents in this monarch's campaigns. In the inscriptions engraved on the alabaster slabs which lined the walls of the palace, and written on the clay cylinders preserved among its foundations, the conquests of Tiglath-Pileser and his triumphs over neighbouring princes are narrated. The warlike monarch tells us how he destroyed the city of Sarrabanu and made it into heaps; how he impaled the king before the gate of his city, and carried away his wife, his sons, and his daughters into captivity, together with the treasures of his palace. A description is given us of the conquest of Babylonia, then governed by its native king, Ukin-zir (the Chinzeros of Ptolemy), but soon to be subdued under the supremacy of Assyria. As a thanksgiving for this success, the victor offered up sacrifices to the principal gods and goddesses: to Ashur, to Bel, to Nebo, to Nana, the Lady of Babylon, and to Nergal. Tiglath-Pileser also turned his arms northwards, and vanquished the territories of Armenia or Ararat. But this did not satisfy him: the lands of the west tempted him by their wealth, as they tempted his predecessors and successors. He sent

his officer, the *Rabsak*—a designation which the Hebrews turned into the name *Rabshakeh*—to Tyre, and forced the King of Tyre to pay him a tribute of one hundred and fifty talents of gold; the kings of the Hittites were also his tributaries. With the cedars of Lebanon he erected at Calah a magnificent palace, which he adorned with the gold, silver, and bronze sent to him by the vanquished princes of the West.

But that which interests us most in the annals of Tiglath-Pileser is that portion which alludes to his relations with the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. At this time Azariah, who is more commonly called Uzziah, was sitting upon the throne of Judah. Tiglath-Pileser mentions many cities which were unfaithful to Assyria and allied themselves with Azariah; he conquered them, and set Assyrian officers over them as governors. Menahem, King of Samaria, and Rezin, King of Syria, appear among the list of princes who paid tribute to this Assyrian monarch. The gifts sent by the various countries and cities who thus acknowledged the supremacy of Assyria consisted of gold, silver, lead, iron, hides, garments of variegated stuffs, of blue and scarlet, precious woods, asses with scarlet trappings, birds of gay plumage, horses, mules, sheep and oxen, and camels.

In other passages Tiglath-Pileser says that he put Pekah to death, and made Hoshea king in his room; and that he carried away many of the inhabitants of Samaria to Assyria, and received tribute from the new king. The Kingdom of Israel is named in the latter

passage the House of Omri: a designation which, as is well known, alternates with Samaria as the name of this country in the Assyrian records. The siege of Damascus by Tiglath-Pileser is narrated in other parts of his annals; the people were shut up within the ramparts like birds in a cage, and the leaders who were taken alive were impaled before the walls of the city.

The difficulty of identifying Pul with any of the Assyrian kings mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions became greater when the chronological lists of Assyrian sovereigns were found. According to these, Tiglath-Pileser was preceded on the throne of Assyria by Ashurnirari, who reigned eight years, and before whom came Ashur-dan, who reigned eighteen years, and who had followed Shalmaneser III., the successor of Rammanirari; this takes us back to the beginning of the eighth century. On the other hand, the immediate successor of Tiglath-Pileser was Shalmaneser IV., who was followed by Sargon, and his son Sennacherib. There was thus no appearance of any king named Pul in these Assyrian lists, even if we were to suppose some gross chronological error in the Hebrew narrative.

We have already seen, however, that Tiglath-Pileser states in his annals that he conquered Ukin-zir, king of Chaldæa, and made that country subject to Assyria; and yet in the Ptolemaic list of Babylonian kings the name of Tiglath-Pileser does not occur. On the other hand, the name of Chinzerus is found there as that of a king who reigned together with another named Porus; the former of these two words is evidently a corruption

of Ukin-zir, and the latter resembles the Hebrew Pul, since *r* and *l* are often interchanged. Could Tiglath-Pileser have been known in Babylonia by a different name, as Pul? This question was finally answered in the affirmative by two documents: the Babylonian list of kings, acquired by the British Museum in 1880, and the "Babylonian Chronicle," made known to the world by Mr. Pinches, in 1884. The Babylonian list gives the name of Ukin-zir, who reigned over Babylon for three years, and places next to it the name of *Pulu*, who sat on the throne for two years. The "Babylonian Chronicle," on the other hand, tells us that Tiglath-Pileser invaded Babylon in the third year of Ukin-zir, took this prince captive, and seated himself upon the throne of Babylon, which he occupied for the space of two years: the term of his own life. Here we have an absolutely complete explanation of the difficulty with regard to Pul. The latter was the name by which Tiglath-Pileser was known in Babylonia; this monarch is the Pul of the Book of Kings and the Porus of the Ptolemaic Canon; if he is represented in the latter document as reigning together with Chinzerus, this is because the native prince was still alive in captivity during the two years' rule of the Assyrian invader; their joint reigns amount to five years.

The two names of Tiglath-Pileser are not the only instances of the kind in Assyrian history. His own immediate successor, Shalmaneser IV., who invaded Samaria in the reign of Hoshea, and governed Assyria and Babylonia for five years (B.C. 727-722), was known



SARGON : BAS-RELIEF FROM HIS PALACE AT KHORSABAD.

in the latter country as Ululai : a name represented by the Ilulaios of the Ptolemaic Canon. The successor of Shalmaneser IV. was Sargon, the "king of Assyria" whose attack upon Ashdod is mentioned by Isaiah, and in whose reign the final capture of Samaria and destruction of the kingdom of Israel took place ; and Sargon appears to have also borne the name of Jareb ; for it can hardly * be another who is thus alluded to by the prophet Hosea :—

"When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb : yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound."

And again :—

"The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven : for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

"It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb : Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

"As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water."

A few verses further on, Hosea speaks of the immediate predecessor of Sargon, using the abbreviated form of his name :—

"Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle : the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children."

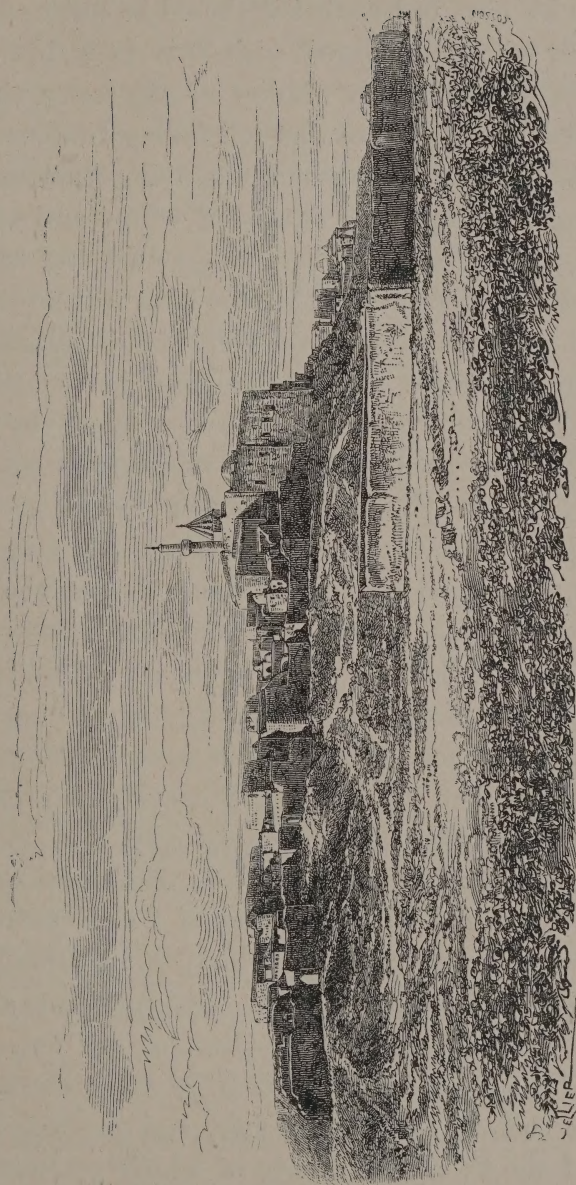
Another instance of the double names borne by kings of Assyria is that of Ashurbanipal, or Sardana-

* See Professor Sayce in "Babylonian and Oriental Records," II., No. 1, p. 18 ff.

palus, who appears as Kandalanu on the Babylonian contract tablets, and as Kineladanos in the Canon of Ptolemy. Among the Israelites the same peculiarity occurs, for Solomon was called Jedidiah, and Gideon Jerubbaal.

The "Babylonian Chronicle," which has just been mentioned, was written upon the clay tablet which we now possess in the twenty-second year of Darius Hystaspis, king of Persia, and is a copy from an older original. It gives the names of the kings who ruled over Babylon from Nabonassar to Shamash-shum-ukin, the Saosduchinos of Ptolemy, and the brother of Sardanapalus, who afterwards put him to death; the length of each reign is carefully given, and various events of importance are noted from time to time. The wars and revolutions which took place are recorded, and the chronicler is careful to note when the images of the gods were carried off from such or such a city, and when they were brought back by a change of fortune. Among the political events, it is interesting to find the murder of Sennacherib by his son, in accordance with the statement of Isaiah and the Second Book of Kings.

Among the stories told by the Greek writer Ælian to show the intelligence of animals and birds is the following: An ancient king of Babylon, named Sevechoros, was warned by the priests that the offspring of his daughter would be a source of danger to himself. He therefore shut her up in a lofty tower, to which none but the guardian had access, and when her child



VILLAGE OF NEM-YUNUS AMONG THE RUINS OF NINEVEH, CONTAINING THE SO-CALLED TOMB OF JONAH.

was born he gave orders that it should be put to death. The officer who was charged with this task threw the infant out of the topmost window of the tower, that it might be dashed to pieces through falling from so great a height. But an eagle which was flying past received the falling child upon its outspread wings and carried him to a place of safety, where he grew up, and whence he issued in after-days to become king instead of his grandfather. The name of the child was Gilgames.

When the name of the Chaldæan hero, hitherto provisionally read as Gisdubar, was found by Mr. Pinches to have been pronounced Gilgamesh—at least by the later Babylonians—Professor Sayce at once recognised the identity of this name with the Gilgames of Ælian, and thus arrived at some idea of the date assigned by the ancient historians upon the banks of the Euphrates to the hero of their legend; for Sevechoros, the grandfather of Gilgames, is evidently the same as the Sevechoos who appeared in the work of Berosus as the first king after the Flood, and one of the mythical princes who preceded the Median dynasty.

The new reading of this name, Gisdubar, as Gilgamesh, was found on a fragment of a clay tablet, inscribed with a portion of a syllabary explaining the pronunciation of various words. Everyone feels an interest in the Babylonian hero, Gisdubar or Gilgamesh, for he is the subject of the great series of legends which formed a sort of Babylonian epic, and contained the history of the Flood, the events of which are narrated to Gisdubar by Adra-khasis or Xisuthrus, the Babylonian

Noah. George Smith was inclined to identify Gisdubar with the Nimrod of the Book of Genesis, because the former was "a giant, a subduer of great animals in the times after the Flood; and he acquired the sovereignty of Babylonia, one of his capitals being Uruk, or Erech." *

Another recent discovery of Mr. Pinches was that of a new version of the story of the Creation, different from that found in the series of legends from Nineveh, and published by George Smith. The new version is part of an incantation, written in the Accadian language, and accompanied by a translation in Assyrian. It appears to speak of the principal cities and temples as having been created at the very beginning of the world:—

"In that day Eridu was made, Ê-sagila [the great Temple of Bel, in Babylon] was constructed;

"Esagila, which the god Lugal-du-azaga had founded within the abyss.

"Babylon was built, Esagila was completed.

"He made the gods and the Anunnaki [*i.e.* spirits] together;

"He announced from on high the name of the glorious city, the habitation which gives joy to their hearts.

"Merodach bound together a foundation beside the waters;

"He made dust, and poured it out with the flood,

"That he might cause the gods to dwell in a habitation that brings joy to their hearts.

"He created men;

"The goddess Aruru created the family of mankind together with him.

"He made the beasts of the field, and living creatures in the fields.

"He created the Tigris and the Euphrates, and set them in their place.

* G. Smith, in "Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.," Vol. III., p. 460.

"He called them by their name with favour.

"He created the grass, the plants of the marsh, the reed, and the forest.

"He created the verdure of the plain,

"The lands, the lakes, the thicket,

"The oxen, the young of the ox, the cow and her calf.

"He laid the bricks, he made the beams,

"He constructed the house, he built the city,

"He built the city, he made the foundations glorious.

"He built the city of Niffer; he built E-kura, its temple.

"He built the city of Erech; he built E-ana, its temple."

Some of the phrases in this account resemble the history of the Creation in the Book of Genesis; and the cities of Babel and Erech, which the Babylonians thought so ancient that they imagined their foundation contemporary with the creation of the world, are said by the Hebrew writer to have been built in the very earliest ages after the Flood.

Among the Assyrian literature, a considerable number of prayers or hymns, addressed to the gods, have been found. Some of these have been compared to the Hebrew psalms, and Dr. Zimmern has published a few of them, under the title of "Babylonian Penitential Psalms." Recently Dr. Brünnow has also edited, from some clay tablets, a small collection of Assyrian hymns, a few passages of which may be given here.

The Sun-god is thus addressed:—

"At the ends of the earth, in the midst of the heavens, art thou suspended.

"Thou orderest all the peoples of the world.

"Thou rulest over all that the god Ea, the king, has created.

"Thou carest for all those that have life ;
"Thou art the shepherd of those on high and of those below.
"Thou goest over the firmament of the heavens ;
"To subdue the earth thou comest every day."

"There is not among the spirits one who can rest without thee ;
"Of the gods of all the hosts, who is mighty like thee ?

"The binder of the prison,—his horn thou destroyest ;
"The doer of violence, who plans oppression for his land,
"The unjust judge—thou showest him bonds.

"He that takes bribes, and is not rightly guided—upon him thou puttest sin.

"But he that accepts no bribe, that takes the part of the weak,
"Shall receive good things from the Sun-god, and shall obtain life."

Among the hymns is one which contains a prayer, addressed by Ashurnasirpal, the powerful king of Assyria who reigned in the earlier part of the ninth century before Christ, to the goddess Ishtar, the Ash-toreth of the Phœnicians, who was also sometimes called Nana. She is thus addressed :—

"To the Lady of Nineveh, the exalted ;
"To the daughter of Sin, the Moon-god, to the sister of Shamash, the Sun-god ;
"To her who determines decrees, the goddess of the universe ;
"To the lady of heaven and earth, who receives prayers ;
"To her who hearkens unto pleading, who accepts supplications ;
"To the merciful goddess, who loves justice.
"Ishtar is distressed by the sight of confusion.
"The afflictions which I see I bewail before thee ;
"Let thy ears attend to my words, full of sighing ;
"Let thy mind be opened to my afflicted speech ;
"Look upon me, O Lady, that through thy turning towards me the heart of thy servant may become strong !"

CHAPTER XIV.

A SUMMARY OF FORMER RESULTS.

IN the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to present in a simple form some of the chief results of Assyriological research during the last few years; it may now be profitable to glance back at the discoveries, referring to the history of the Bible, that had previously been made. What was learnt, then, from the cuneiform inscriptions, about the beliefs of the Babylonians or Assyrians with regard to the creation and constitution of the world, and its first ages, that may be compared with the account given in the Book of Genesis?

The tablets hitherto found recounting the creation of the world are, for the most part, much mutilated, so that we can form only an imperfect idea of the whole series of legends which belong to that section of the Babylonian literature. The heaven and earth were believed to have come into existence through the union of the seas with the waters of the abyss, which had existed from all eternity. The name of the sea or deep is the same as that which is employed in Genesis :—

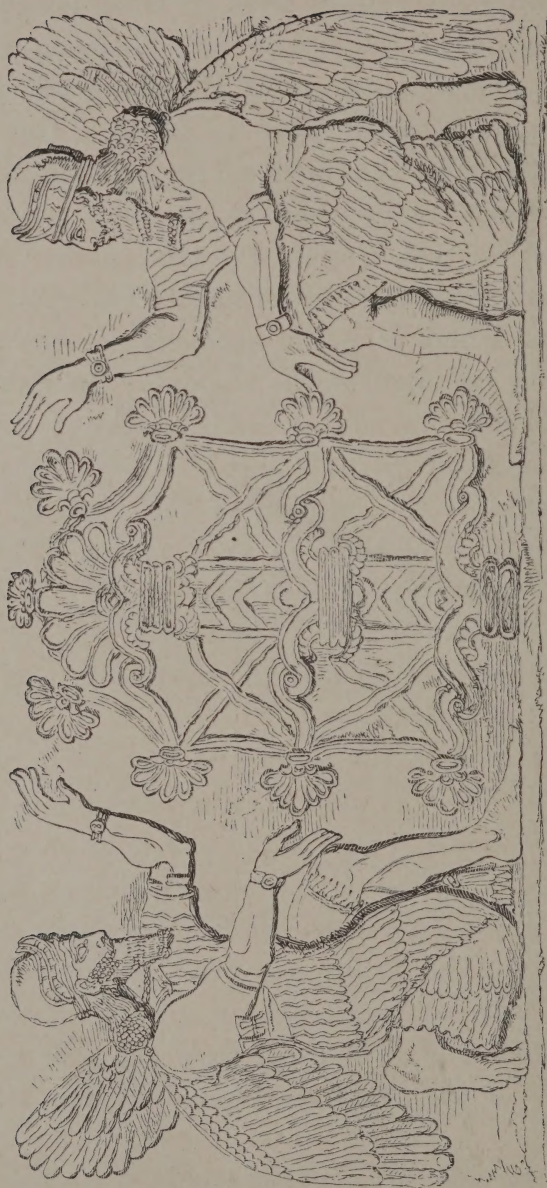
“And darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

The division of light from darkness is symbolized in the legend of the deadly fight between the god Merodach and the dragon* of the abyss, whom he at length vanquishes and tears to pieces. Out of her limbs rent asunder the earth and sky are formed.

The office of creator, however, is sometimes assigned to the god Ea, who receives the title of the "Potter," because he formed man out of clay. The word for the material of which man was made is not the same in the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts; the Babylonian thought of the alluvial clay of his marshy plains, while the Hebrew word means "dust" simply. One of the tablets describes the creation of the heavenly bodies and the setting of them in their places. The moon was appointed as a star of the night. Times and seasons were marked out. The zenith was set in the middle of the heavens, and the north and south were established in their places.

With regard to the account of the garden of Eden, it has been thought that certain illustrations of the history are to be found in the cuneiform inscriptions. The word Eden has no meaning in Hebrew, but may be a form of the Babylonian word which means "plain," or "field." The expression "tree of life" has not been met with on Babylonian or Assyrian tablets, but the bas-reliefs and cylindrical seals show us that the inhabitants of the countries watered by the Hiddekel

* The text containing this legend was brought by Mr. Rassam from Babylon, copied and described by Dr. Budge in 1883, and translated by Prof. Sayce in 1887. Dr. Budge published his copy in 1887.



SACRED TREE OF THE ASSYRIANS.

(Tigris) and Euphrates held in reverence as a sacred symbol a conventional representation of a tree, which sometimes appears guarded by two deities, one on each side of it. This sacred tree was often embroidered upon the robes of the Assyrians, perhaps as a charm. In the same way, the equivalent of the word "cherubim" does not seem to have been found with certainty; but the winged and human-headed beings who defended the entrances of the Assyrian palaces seem to correspond to the descriptions of the figures upon the Ark of the Israelites and to those seen in the vision of Ezekiel.

The most remarkable illustration of the Book of Genesis found among the Assyrian and Babylonian documents is the history of the Flood. It must be remembered, indeed, that neither the account of the Creation furnished us by the cuneiform inscriptions, nor that of the Deluge obtained from the same sources, were entirely new to us; we knew from the extracts, still preserved, of the Babylonian history of Berosus that such accounts existed among the literature of the Chaldaean priests, and certain details of them were also known. Yet it was a great advantage to acquire copies of the very documents upon which Berosus may have founded his history: copies made, too, some centuries before the date of that historian; and, moreover, the tablets contained much that was quite new to us.

The account of the Flood upon the clay tablets, first made known by George Smith in 1872, is given by Sît-napishtim (or Shamash-napishtim) to Gilgamesh

(Gisdubar), the great Babylonian hero. Sît-napishtim is the Babylonian Noah; he bore another name: Atrahasis, which is probably the native name represented by the Greek form Xisuthrus, employed by Berossus as the appellation of this hero. Like most of the tablets from which the accounts of the first ages of the world, as preserved among the Babylonians, are at present to be learnt, the tablets containing the account of the Flood are fragmentary, and many of the fragments are defaced and illegible in parts. We are able to learn, however, that Bel, contrary to the desires of the other gods, determined to send a flood of waters upon the earth, and to destroy the whole of mankind. Some of the gods, therefore, without the knowledge of Bel, bade Sît-napishtim, whom they wished to save from death on account of his virtues, build a ship, and stock it with the means of livelihood, that he and his family might not be destroyed with the rest of their fellow-creatures. After a gap of several lines, we find Sît-napishtim entering the ship with his wife, his family, and beasts of the field; after entering, he shut the door. The ship was pitched within and without. The name of the helmsman was Puzur-Bel. Now the waters began to descend upon the earth; the god Rimmon gave forth his thunders; the whole world was overwhelmed; even the gods trembled at the sight of the destruction that was wrought; the goddess Ishtar, in particular, poured forth lamentations over the fate of mankind. For six days and six nights the rain descended and the storm raged. On the seventh day the flood ceased.

Sît-napishtim looked out from his ship, and saw that all men had returned to the clay from which they were taken, and he wept bitter tears over the sight which he beheld. The ship rested on the mountain of Nisir, and remained fast. After another seven days, Sît-napishtim sent out a dove from his ship, but as she could find no resting-place, she returned to the ship. Then he let loose a swallow, which returned in the same way. Lastly, Sît-napishtim sent out a raven, which found that the waters had abated, and did not return to the ship. Thereupon, Sît-napishtim left his ship, with his family, and offered sacrifice to the four winds upon the summit of the mountain; he placed seven vessels of libations as offerings to the gods. The gods smelt the savour of the sacrifice, and assembled about it like flies. The goddess Ishtar again broke out into lamentations over the destruction of mankind, and condemned the folly of Bel, who had sent the flood upon them. When Bel saw the ship, and discovered that some had been saved from the general fate, he was exceedingly indignant, but the rest of the gods succeeded in appeasing his wrath. The great creator, Ea, especially pleaded the cause of mankind, and blamed Bel for sending the flood upon them; it was Ea who had warned Sît-napishtim, in a dream, of the approaching catastrophe. Finally, Bel accepted the defence of Ea, and bestowed his blessing upon Sît-napishtim and his wife, who were raised to the rank of divinities.

This is the history of the Deluge, according to the tablets found in the library of the palace of Sardanapalus

at Nineveh, and borrowed, doubtless, by the Assyrian scribes from the literature of Babylonia. The place at which Sît-napishtim is represented as dwelling is Shurippak, beside Sippara, near the Euphrates, and not far from Ur; and after their deification he and his wife are destined to dwell at the mouth of the stream. Many points are omitted in the above paraphrase which seem to be of doubtful meaning, or depend upon conjectural emendations of the mutilated text.

After the cosmogony, we come to the history. The Book of Genesis alludes to the beginnings of the primeval States founded in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates when the rest of the world, except Egypt, was sunk in barbarism. Nimrod,* the grandson of Ham, founded, we are told, Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar; and Asshur went forth from the same land, and founded Nineveh, and Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah: "the same is a great city." Many of these names were found upon clay tablets or bricks in the first period of Assyrian research, and the immense antiquity of the Babylonian cities was fully illustrated. The investigations among the ruins on the Tigris also appeared to explain the account of the cities founded by Asshur.

The great size attributed to Nineveh by the Book of Jonah, and also by the Greek historian Ctesias, had always been a stumbling-block to commentators. But as early as the sixteenth century the suggestion was offered that the name of Nineveh was sometimes

* Compare above, p. 149 f.

given in an extended sense to a group of cities situated close together, and perhaps connected by populous suburbs: an explanation suggested by the verse in Genesis just quoted, which names four towns, and concludes with the words, "this is the great city." Sir Henry Layard's excavations soon proved that while the mounds of Kouyunjik and Nebi-Yunus, with their encircling rampart, bore, in accordance with the unbroken tradition, the name of Nineveh, the mounds of Nimroud, a little to the south, represented the ancient Calah, mentioned in the passage of Genesis. Resen must have been between these two groups of ruins, and is doubtless marked by the mounds which still exist in the intermediate space. Now, if a line was drawn to include these ruins and the neighbouring mounds of Khorsabad, a thickly-populated district would thus be marked out, bounded on the west by the Tigris and on the south by the Zab, and forming, in fact, one "great city" about ninety miles in circumference, and requiring three days for a journey around its walls. The principal quarter of this great city would be Nineveh proper, which might quite naturally give its name to the whole group; just as at the present day "the district of Mosul" includes a large space around that town, and "the district of Babel" extends for many miles around the ruins of Babylon. As for Rehoboth Ir—"the city of Rehoboth," as our version puts it—it means properly the "wide places of the city," and may well denote the interspaces between the principal quarters of the great town.

Nineveh proper, on the other hand, was not a city

of great dimensions ; its walls are still to be traced, and its site was surveyed in 1852 by a commission sent by the Indian Government. According to the results of this investigation, the city was seven miles and four furlongs in circumference : just one-eighth of the extent given by Ctesias. The area amounts to eighteen hundred acres, and if one inhabitant is allotted to fifty square yards, according to the common estimate, the population of Nineveh would have numbered 174,000 souls, whereas it is inferred from the Book of Jonah that the great city contained 700,000 inhabitants. Nothing is more reasonable, therefore, than to conclude that this Nineveh proper was rather the citadel or head-quarters of a thickly-populated district, commonly spoken of as "the great city," or, by an extension of the meaning of the name, simply as Nineveh.

The Tower of Babel, or Babylon, without doubt exists to the present day in the ruins of Birs Nimroud,* the antiquity of which is attested by the cuneiform inscriptions. It was named by the Babylonians Bitzida, and formed the centre of the town of Borsippa, which afterwards became part of the enlarged city of Babylon, under Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar. The latter monarch carried out extensive restorations in this great sanctuary. It would appear from one of his inscriptions that the summit of the tower had never been finished down to his time, and that he was the first who completed the structure. The ruin is, even now, 153 feet in height. It was especially dedicated to

* See page 273.

Nebo, the interpreter of the gods, and the patron of writing and literature. Nebuchadnezzar overlaid the temple with gold and silver, and furnished it with cedar and bronze.

As we have seen in a former chapter, the ruins of Mukeyyer have been identified by modern research with the city named Ur of the Chaldees in Genesis. The extent of the remains at Mukeyyer*—which, however, have been but imperfectly examined—show that the ancient city was of great size, and that it was especially devoted to the worship of Sin, the Moon-god, whose great temple still exists in part. In very early times the kings of Ur held sway over an extensive territory in the neighbourhood of the city. Terah, with his son Abram and the rest of his family, migrated to Haran, a town which is several times mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions; it lay in the region of Mesopotamia.

The first Babylonian king mentioned in the Bible is Amraphel, king of Shinar, who, together with Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Arioch, king of Ellasar, invaded the land of Canaan in the time of Abram. The cuneiform inscriptions have supplied us with certain information which may throw some light on the history of these kings. In the first place, Babylonia was invaded and conquered, about B.C. 2360, by an Elamite prince, named Kudurnankhundi, the first part of whose name seems to correspond to the first part of the name of Chedorlaomer, especially if we remember

* See page 132.

that the vowels of our present Hebrew text are often uncertain in proper names, and that the Septuagint writes the word as Chodollogomor. The second part of Chedorlaomer's name would seem to be the appellation of the Elamite god Lagamar, whose image was carried away from Susa by Sardanapalus in the seventh century before Christ. Another Elamite king is known to us, whose name begins with the element Kudur; * this is Kudurmapuk, who reigned over part of Babylonia perhaps about B.C. 2250, and who also names himself "lord of Syria." Whether his son, who reigned over Larsa—possibly identical with Ellasar—and whose name was perhaps pronounced Riaku, is the same as the Arioch of Genesis must remain an open question. The same must be said of Khammurabi, king of Babylon about the same time, who has been identified by some with the Amraphel of the narrative in question.

Upon the death of Sarah, we are told, Abraham bought the field and cave of Machpelah, at Hebron, of the Hittites, then in possession of the country, for four hundred shekels of silver. This was according to the Babylonian system of money, and the word shekel means "weight" in Babylonian as in Hebrew. The Hebrews, however, reckoned fifty† shekels to a maneh: not sixty, as the Babylonians did; this was merely a modification of the system which they had borrowed

* The suggestion is, of course, that Chedorlaomer belonged to the same dynasty as these other Elamite "Kudurides."

† In later times the Hebrews reckoned 100 shekels to a maneh; compare 1 Kings x. 17 with 2 Chron. ix. 16. Ezekiel xlv. 12 seems to adopt the Babylonian computation of 60 shekels to a maneh.

from their kinsmen. Many weights, in the form of bronze lions or ducks, have been found among the Assyrian ruins, marked with the amount which they represent, as *e.g.* "one royal maneh." The amount is generally marked in Aramaic as well as in Assyrian: a proof of the foreign trade at the time; the weights, however, belong to a period much later than that which we are now speaking of: namely, to the ninth and eighth centuries.

It is when we come to the period described in the Second Book of Kings that the cuneiform inscriptions supply us with more numerous illustrations. Omri, the king of Israel who founded Samaria, is not himself spoken of, but his successor, Jehu, appears on the obelisk of Shalmaneser II. (B.C. 860-825) as "the son of Omri," who paid tribute, among others, to this Assyrian monarch.* The kingdom of Israel is also called "the House of Omri;" but the name "Israelite" itself is given to Ahab, whose troops fought against the same Shalmaneser in company with Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and were defeated. Later, Hazael, king of Syria, also appears in the Assyrian inscriptions as being overcome by Shalmaneser, and as paying him tribute at the same time as Jehu. Jeroboam II., although not mentioned by name, also appears to have paid tribute to Ramman-nirari, king of Assyria (B.C. 812-783).

It has already been stated that Tiglath-Pileser in his annals names Azariah of Judah, and says that

* It is well known that there are occasional discrepancies between the Biblical chronology and that of the cuneiform inscriptions.

he overcame some of the allies, but not the Jewish monarch himself. This fully agrees with the picture drawn of Azariah, in the Second Books of Kings and Chronicles, as a powerful prince. It is to be noted also that the Assyrian records give the name as Azariah, not as Uzziah, and thus prove that the king had two names, and that the form Azariah is not a clerical error, as had sometimes been supposed. Menahem of Israel and Ahaz of Judah are mentioned as paying tribute to Tiglath-Pileser in the annals of this monarch. Pekah was slain, and Hoshea was appointed in his stead by the Assyrian king, and thus was simply the vassal of the latter; and when he revolted and turned to Egypt for support, at once drew upon himself the wrath of his suzerain. The final siege of Samaria was begun by Shalmaneser IV., according to the Second Book of Kings; but of this Shalmaneser few records have yet been discovered among the cuneiform inscriptions; the chronological lists, however, give his name and the length of his reign: a period of five years only (B.C. 727-722).^{*} Professor Schrader also attributes to this Shalmaneser a bronze weight in the form of a lion, found in the north-west palace of Nimroud. But although the Book of Kings states that Shalmaneser came up against Hoshea, who became his servant, it does not expressly say that it was this monarch who actually took Samaria; and the cuneiform inscriptions

^{*} The Babylonian Chronicle states that the "city of Shabarin" was destroyed in this reign; and a black stone in the Berlin Museum mentions a certain governor of Dur-ilu in the reign of Shalmaneser IV.

tell us that the "king of Assyria" who finally captured the city and subdued the kingdom of Israel was Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser. In the year of Sargon's accession to the throne, he or his troops took Samaria. It was on account of treacherous dealings with "So, king of Egypt," that Hoshea drew upon himself the chastisement of his Assyrian suzerain: so we are told by the Hebrew historian; and this Egyptian prince So, or Sabaco, appears in the cuneiform records, where he is called the "tartan," or "general," of Egypt, and his name is given as *Sib'u*. So, or Sabaco, king of Egypt, was put to flight by Sargon in a battle, thus recorded in the same inscription from Khorsabad:—

"Khanunu, king of Gaza, together with *Sib'u* the tartan [general] of Egypt, marched against me to Rapikhu, to give me battle; I inflicted a defeat upon them. *Sib'u* feared the noise of my weapons, fled away, and was no more found; Khanunu, king of Gaza, I took captive. I received the tribute of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, of Samsi, queen of Arabia, and of the king of Saba: gold, products of the mountains, horses, and camels."

The fate of Samaria after its final capture by the Assyrians is described for us in the Book of Kings: the inhabitants were deported to Assyria and other distant provinces of Sargon's empire; some of them were placed in the city of Halah; others on the river Habor, a branch of the Euphrates; and others at Gozan, in Mesopotamia. The same events are briefly recorded in the inscriptions at Khorsabad describing Sargon's exploits.

"I besieged and captured the city of Samaria; I seized as my spoil twenty-seven thousand two hundred and eighty of its inhabi-

tants ; I set apart fifty chariots found among them, and I made my soldiers take the rest of their goods ; my officer I placed over the inhabitants, and imposed upon them the same tribute that former kings had received from them."

After the deportation of the native inhabitants of the kingdom of Samaria to more eastern regions, some of the inhabitants of Babylonian cities were brought to fill their place. The Assyrian kings were, of course, enemies and conquerors in Babylonia as well as in the kingdom of Israel, and Sargon and his predecessors and successors were on many occasions occupied in subduing rebellions in the southern regions of the Euphrates ; hence, there is nothing surprising in the fact that some of the Babylonians were sent away like slaves out of their own country, to weaken the hostile elements in that part of the Assyrian Empire. The towns from which they were chosen are well known to us from the native records on clay. Not to mention Babylon, Sepharvaim is the large and flourishing city of Sippara, the seat of the Sun-god ; Cuthah is *Kutu*, one of the chief towns of the south ; and Hamath is the great Hittite city on the Orontes. From this last place the cuneiform inscriptions expressly tell us that Sargon carried away many of the inhabitants after he had vanquished the native king, Ilubid ; and that subsequently he planted a colony of fresh inhabitants in this depopulated district.

This history of Sargon is one of the greatest results of the interpretation of the cuneiform inscriptions. Before the excavations of Botta and the decipherment of the

engraved slabs and clay cylinders which he brought to light, this great Assyrian conqueror was only known to us from a passage referring to his conquest of Ashdod, in the Book of Isaiah. The Canon of Ptolemy preserved his name, indeed, but in a form not to be recognised, since Sargon appears in that document, among the rulers of Babylonia, as "Arkeanos." The king of Assyria who captured Samaria, according to the Book of Kings, was understood to be Shalmaneser. There is no reason to suppose, however, that either Shalmaneser or Sargon took part in the siege in person; the military operations undertaken during the reign of an Assyrian king are always attributed by Oriental servility to the monarch himself, and possibly the inhabitants of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, when the city of Samaria fell, were actually ignorant that Shalmaneser had died, and that Sargon had recently, in that very year, ascended the throne in the distant city of Nineveh. The records of Sargon now discovered inform us of the chief events that took place during the whole of his seventeen years' reign (B.C. 722-705). During that period the Assyrian armies undertook several successful campaigns in Samaria, in Elam, in Babylonia, among the Hittites and the Philistines; in Syria, in Media, in Armenia, on the borders of Egypt and Arabia. The fame of the conqueror spread so far that even the inhabitants of the islands in the upper and lower seas, in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, through fear of him, sent him tribute; and the princes of Cyprus and of Dilmun acknowledged him as their suzerain.

In the year 711, Sargon, whose conquests extended on all sides of his kingdom, undertook a campaign against Ashdod and other cities of the Philistines whose princes refused the customary tribute. Ashdod was taken, in accordance with the statement of Isaiah and of the native chroniclers of Nineveh. The following account is given in the great inscription on the walls of Sargon's palace at Dur-Sarrukin, the modern Khorsabad, excavated in 1843 by Botta:—

“Azuri, king of Ashdod, planned in his heart to bring no more tribute, and sent to the kings of the neighbouring districts to make war against the land of Assyria. On account of the evil he had done, I had removed him from the government of the people of his land, and had placed his brother, Akhimiti, to rule over them. But evil-minded Hittites were hostile to the government of this prince, and raised up Yamani, who had no claim to the throne, and who, like them, would not acknowledge my supremacy. In the wrath of my heart I did not collect the mass of my troops nor break up my camp. With my soldiers alone, who do not turn aside from the place to which I turn, I marched to Ashdod. But Yamani heard of the approach of my troops when I was yet far off, fled to Egypt, and was no more seen. I besieged and took Ashdod, Gath, and Ashdudimmu; his gods, his wife, his sons and daughters, his property, the treasures of his palace, together with the people of his land, I counted as booty. I settled those cities anew, and caused people from the east, whom I had vanquished, to inhabit them; I set my officer over them, and counted them as subjects of the land of Assyria; and they paid submission to me.”

The son and successor of Sargon was Sennacherib, whose name means, “The Moon-god multiplies brothers.” For the first part of Sennacherib's reign we possess records as complete as those of his father's; they proceed, for the most part, from the palace which he founded in

the city of Nineveh, properly so-called, and which is now concealed under the mound of Kouyunjik, but has been excavated by Sir H. Layard and Mr. Rassam. Sennacherib's name was, of course, well known from the account in the Second Book of Kings and in Isaiah of his campaign against Hezekiah, and, as it happens, the cylinders found in the usual cavities at the corners of the platform of his palace give an account of this very expedition, which took place in the third year of his reign (B.C. 701).

Of Sennacherib's siege of Lachish we have not only mention in writing, but also bas-reliefs depicting the events of the siege; these are now in the British Museum. One of the bas-reliefs shows Sennacherib himself sitting on a richly-decorated throne in state, while the Jewish captives are brought before him. A short inscription above explains the scene:—

“Sennacherib, king of the hosts, king of Assyria, sits upon his throne, while the spoils of Lachish pass before him.”

It is true that no account has yet been found among the Assyrian records—of which we are far from possessing a complete series—of the destruction of Sennacherib's army, mentioned in the Book of Kings and in Isaiah, and also referred to by Herodotus. Still, there are certain points to be remarked in the Assyrian narrative. It is quite clear that Sennacherib did not take Jerusalem or annex the kingdom of Judah to his own empire, although Hezekiah paid him tribute, as the Hebrew record also tells us; it is certain that Sennacherib,

for some reason, did not carry out his threat, reported by the Hebrew historian, of deporting the people of Jerusalem from their own country into the east. The only point on which the two narratives would seem at first to contradict one another is the conquest of the Egyptians mentioned by the cylinders, while the Hebrew account seems to speak of Sennacherib as retreating before Tirhakah. This is explained by some writers by the supposition* of two campaigns of Sennacherib in Southern Palestine: one comparatively successful, ending in the extortion of tribute from Hezekiah and the taking of Lachish; the other unsuccessful, and ending in the destruction of the Assyrian army. Of the latter campaign we have no account at present in the native records. Professor Schrader, on the other hand, believes that there is no reason to imagine a second expedition of Sennacherib unmentioned in the Bible or in the cuneiform inscriptions. As he says, the victory over the Egyptians would seem to have been very slight, hardly amounting to a victory at all; there is no list of booty taken from the enemy, and no conquest of the country; nothing more probable, therefore, than that a subsequent rally and advance of the Egyptian army should take place, as mentioned in 2 Kings xix. 9:—

“He heard say of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee.”

After thus receiving the news of the advance of the

* See Sir H. Rawlinson, in Canon Rawlinson's "Herodotus," I., p. 393, and Canon Rawlinson's "Five Great Monarchies," II., p. 165.

Egyptians, Sennacherib made a fresh attempt to reduce Hezekiah to submission by threats, and then returned to his own country, after the destruction of his army. The last occurrence is naturally passed over in silence by the Assyrian records, which conclude with a statement of the tribute paid by Hezekiah earlier in the campaign. The amount of the tribute is identical in the two accounts; for, though the Hebrew narrative mentions three hundred talents of silver and the Assyrian eight hundred, this results from the difference of the talent of silver in the two countries. The Palestinian talent of silver was exactly eight-thirds of the Babylonian; the talent of gold, on the other hand, was the same in both countries.

Of Sennacherib's murder by his son at Nineveh we have only recently obtained information from the Assyrian records.*

Tirhakah was a king of the Ethiopian dynasty which ruled Egypt at this period. He was afterwards subdued by Esarhaddon, the son and successor of Sennacherib, as we learn from the inscriptions of Esarhaddon's son Sardanapalus, who also fought successfully against this monarch, and who tells us:—

“In my first expedition I marched against Magan and Meroe. Tirhaka, king of Egypt and Ethiopia, whom Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, my father, defeated, and whose land he made his own possession, despised the might of Ashur and Ishtar, the great gods, my lords, and presumed upon his own strength.”

That Esarhaddon was the son of Sennacherib is

* See above, p. 322.

confirmed by many passages. We possess, for instance, bricks of his reign, stamped with his name thus:—

“Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, son of Sennacherib, king of Assyria.”

The annals of Esarhaddon’s reign state the same fact.

After the account in the Book of Kings and in Isaiah of Sennacherib’s only partly successful campaign in Syria, which ended disastrously to his army, we hear of another Mesopotamian prince, Merodach-baladan, who sent messengers to Hezekiah, and sought alliance with him. This name belonged to more than one Babylonian king about this period; its meaning is “The god Merodach has given a son.” This was a time of repeated conflicts between the Babylonian State and the powerful kings of Assyria: the latter rarely succeeded in maintaining their rule over the southern kingdom for more than a few years without rebellion. As, however, the Hebrew historian does not give the exact date of Merodach-baladan’s embassy, it is somewhat difficult to connect it at present with the prince of that name mentioned in the Assyrian records as rebelling against Sennacherib. But it was probably the Merodach-baladan who reigned for some months in the year B.C. 704 who sent the messengers to Hezekiah.

Hezekiah’s successor on the throne of David was his son Manasseh, who, like his father, paid tribute to his all-powerful Assyrian neighbour; his name occurs among a list of Syrian princes who acknowledged the

supremacy of Esarhaddon. In a similar list of the next reign, that of Sardanapalus, the "king of Judah" also appears; and this is probably Manasseh again. In the Hebrew records, on the other hand, Sardanapalus himself appears to be mentioned as the "great and noble Asnapper" * who sent colonists to Samaria from other parts of his empire. The name Asnapper is probably a corrupted form of Ashurbanipal, the final *l* being changed into *r*, as in Porus, the Greek form of Pul.

The Book of Chronicles states that Manasseh was carried away to Babylon by the king of Assyria, and afterwards restored to his own country. This event has not yet been found related in the Assyrian records, but there are many facts that suggest an explanation of it. From B.C. 668 to B.C. 648, Babylon was ruled by Shamash-shum-ukin, the son of Esarhaddon, and brother of Sardanapalus, king of Assyria. Now, we are expressly told that this prince acted treacherously towards his brother Sardanapalus, and caused certain nations, including the tribes of Syria and Phœnicia, to revolt from their obedience to Nineveh; afterwards Shamash-shum-ukin was vanquished and slain by Sardanapalus, who took the government of Babylon into his own hands. Nothing could be more likely, then, than that Manasseh should be punished in the way described in the Book of Chronicles for his defection from his obedience to his suzerain, the king of Assyria, when the latter had regained the supremacy; and as Babylon was now in the hands of Sardanapalus, it is quite as

* Ezra iv. 10.

natural that the Jewish prince should have been held in captivity there as at the northern capital of Nineveh.

The allusion to the capture of No-Ammon, or Thebes, by the prophet Nahum was never understood until the interpretation of the cuneiform inscriptions threw light upon it. From these it appears that Thebes was taken by Ashurbanipal or Sardanapalus in the course of a successful campaign in Egypt. The prince Urdamani fled from Thebes on the approach of the Assyrian army. The fate of the city thus abandoned is described in the following terms :—

“My hands vanquished this city by the help of Ashur and Ishtar. I seized upon the silver, gold, precious stones, the furniture of the palace, all that was found, garments of variegated stuffs, horses, slaves, both male and female, two obelisks weighing 2,500 talents, which stood at the door of the temple; and all this I took with me to Assyria. Booty without number I captured in Thebes.”

As for the last king of Assyria, Sin-shar-ishkun, or Saracus, he is perhaps alluded to in the brief description of Pharaoh-necho's campaign against the “king of Assyria,” in the course of which Josiah, king of Judah, was slain at the battle of Megiddo, fighting against the Egyptians.*

At the end of the seventh century before Christ, the Assyrian supremacy was overthrown by the Babylonians, and the great king of the southern State, Nebuchadnezzar, now appears as the invader and oppressor of the West-Syrian countries. Of this monarch we possess many monuments, consisting of bricks, tablets, and cylinders,

* 2 Kings xiii. 29.

inscribed with cuneiform characters. At present, however, no account of his campaigns* has been found; the inscriptions are entirely occupied with his work as a builder and restorer of palaces and temples, and his improvements of the city of Babylon. As for the supposed portrait of Nebuchadnezzar preserved on a well-known cameo,† there can be no doubt that, although the inscription engraved around it is a genuine Babylonian inscription, containing the name of the great monarch, yet the head itself is Greek in character, and must have been carved under the Macedonian dynasty on an older gem. The activity of Nebuchadnezzar as a builder, illustrated by the cuneiform inscriptions already found, fully corresponds to the words of the Book of Daniel, which speak of the king as exulting over the magnificence of the city which he had himself done so much to enlarge and beautify :—

“The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?”

In his own annals, Nebuchadnezzar speaks in the same way of the palace which he had built as the “dwelling-place of his kingdom,” or “royalty,” and boasts of having enlarged the city of Babylon and built the two great walls around it. Within this great city,

* There are two fragments of a clay tablet which contained an account of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt (Jer. xliii. 16 ff.; Ez. xxix. 19). Only a few words can be made out.

† Now in the Museum at Florence. If not of the Macedonian period, it may well have been carved under the Parthians, who allowed Seleucia to remain in many ways a Greek city.

as he says, he received tribute from all the princes of the earth, and the homage of all mankind. The chief temples were restored by him, and overlaid with gold until they shone like the sun. It is well known that almost all the bricks dug up in such quantities by the Arabs on the site of Babylon, and employed in the erection of modern houses, bear the name of "Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar," upon them.

Of the last days of the Babylonian monarchy we have already heard in a former chapter. We have seen that Belshazzar was an historical personage, to whose existence ample testimony is borne by the native records, as well as by the Book of Daniel, and that the capture of Babylon by Cyrus is mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions in terms that agree with the allusions in the same book: the city was taken unexpectedly, and without resistance. Nothing, however, has yet been found to explain the position of Darius the Mede, but the same observation would have been made some time ago about Belshazzar, about Pul, and about Sargon. The Babylonian tablets have shown us the origin of the names of the months employed by the Jews from the time of the captivity. Two of these names may be singled out—that of Marchesvan, which is in Babylonian Arakh-samna: that is to say, the eighth month, in accordance with its position in the calendar; and Weadar, which was called on the banks of the Euphrates "the intercalary month of Adar," and was inserted from time to time, to keep the calendar in accordance with the march of the sun.

The Persian kings who are named in the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther are well known to us from the cuneiform inscriptions, as it has already been pointed out. The character of Cyrus and the conciliatory policy which he adopted towards the peoples whom he conquered are well illustrated by the monuments of his reign found in Babylonia. He professes in these documents to be the servant of the native gods, and he carries out the desire of the priests in restoring the images of the gods to their own cities and temples from which they had been brought to Babylon by Nabonidus, whose policy it seems to have been to make the capital a centre * of religious worship, just as Jerusalem was in the west, and to destroy the local cults, which were so deeply rooted in the hearts of his subjects, that in the hope of their restoration they eagerly welcomed a foreign invader.

* See Sayce: "Hibbert Lectures."

CHAPTER XV.

THE ASSYRIANS AS CONQUERORS.

FROM the glimpses that we catch in the pages of the Hebrew prophets and historians, we are able to form some idea of the power and wealth of the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs. We hear of their repeated invasions of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and of the countries that lay upon the borders of these small principalities; and we see the kings of Samaria and of Jerusalem paying heavy tribute, or carried off as captives, or put to death as a punishment for having intrigued with other nations against the Assyrians. To collect together the amount of the tribute extorted by their suzerains, the vassal-kings would even tear off the gold with which the doors and pillars of the Temple itself were overlaid, and would pillage the treasury of Jehovah in order to satisfy the demands of the all-powerful monarch, whose armies were ravaging the surrounding regions, carrying away the inhabitants into slavery, and leaving desolation behind wherever they appeared. We also hear of the greatness of Nineveh and Babylon, the capitals of empires and the centres of trade, where all the culture and

luxury that the time could boast of had reached their culminating point.

The picture painted for us by the Hebrew writers has been explained and rendered more intelligible by the native records which have been brought to light during this century, and interpreted through the patient labour of modern scholars. The annals of the Assyrian kings are little more than a list of conquests or a record of architectural work; these monarchs seem to have been constantly occupied either in overrunning the surrounding countries at the head of their armies, making slaves of the inhabitants, and seizing all the wealth that could be found in the captured cities, or in erecting great palaces and temples of brick and slime, whose tops should reach unto heaven, in the midst of their strongly-fortified cities. In whatever direction the Assyrian armies turned, the same results followed; in Elam, in Media, in Armenia, in Cappadocia, in Syria, in Canaan, the "fenced cities were turned into ruinous heaps," like the "sandhills formed by the whirlwind," and the inhabitants were "dismayed and confounded," for the conquerors "reckoned them as their spoil," together with the gold and silver, the weapons of war, the chariots, and the furniture of the houses.

This is the characteristic feature of the history of the Assyrians from the earliest period, although there were, naturally, long intervals during which their power was weakened for a time, and the course of their conquests was stopped. According to the tradition received by the

Greek and Roman writers who composed histories of the East, the Assyrians were the first to enlarge their dominions beyond their own borders : the first, in fact, to found an empire.

“In the remotest antiquity . . . the nations were occupied in defending their own borders rather than in enlarging them ; the kings were confined within the territories handed down to them by their ancestors. Ninus, king of Assyria, was the first whom the ambition to found an empire drove to change the ancient order of things. He was the first who made war upon his neighbours, and he overcame the tribes, yet inexperienced in the arts of defence, as far as the boundaries of Libya.” *

Ninus, of course, is the mythical king whose name occurs only in Greek and Roman writers, and was borrowed from that of the city of Nineveh, which they also call Ninus ; but the rest of Justin’s words seem to be borne out by what we learn from the native records.

The first Assyrian conqueror of whom we hear is Sargon of Agane.† The account of this monarch’s origin in some points resembles the history of Moses ; for, like the Hebrew law-giver, Sargon was exposed by his mother in a basket of reeds daubed with slime and with pitch, but was afterwards rescued, and lived to achieve greatness. Sargon’s mother was a princess, but his father was unknown ; “the brother of his father dwelt on the mountain.” His mother, to conceal his birth, placed him in a basket of reeds, smeared with bitumen, on the river Euphrates, from whence he was rescued by Akki, the irrigator, who brought him up as his own son, and made him his gardener ; the goddess

* Justin, i. 1.

† See above, pp. 145 and 265.

Ishtar conceived an affection for him, and eventually—by what steps we are not told—set him upon the throne of Accad. This part of the story is evidently a legend; but of the historical character of Sargon there can be no doubt, for we possess several short inscriptions of his time, and of the time of his son, Naram-Sin; nor is there reason to doubt the account of his wars. Sargon extended his conquests to the Mediterranean on the west and to the Persian Gulf on the south; and more than this, he crossed the seas to the island of Cyprus on the one hand, and to the islands of Dilmun, or Bahrein, on the other. His conquest of Cyprus is borne witness to by an inscription that has been found in that island; in this his son, Naram-Sin, is worshipped as a god. The land of Elam was also included in Sargon's conquests, as it was in those of some of his remote successors in the government of Babylonia.

The son of Sargon was Naram-Sin, the founder of the Temple of the Sun at Sippara. This prince is said to have conquered Magan, a country identified with the peninsula of Sinai,* although the name was applied more extensively in later days to the territories of Ethiopia. It was from Magan that Gudea, the ruler of Lagash, obtained, as we have seen, the blocks of diorite out of which his statues and other sculptured works were made. It may have been through the conquests of Naram-Sin that the acquisition of this stone was made possible. Perhaps the copper which Gudea used for his statuettes, now in the British

* See above, p. 156.

Museum and in the Louvre, and for the adornment of his temples, also came from the mines of Sinai; the copper of Cyprus, however, is of better quality, and, as Sargon had subdued Cyprus, there may already have been, in these very early times, an influx of this metal from the island which afterwards gave it its Latin name into Babylonia. The intercourse between Egypt and Babylonia at this remote period is further illustrated by the scale of measurement found on the graduated rule which Gudea holds on his knee in the statue which represents him in the character of architect;* for the standard of measurement here marked is recognised by Mr. Petrie as identical with that used by the Egyptians of the fourth and two following dynasties, and as differing slightly from that employed in later times by the Babylonians and Assyrians.

The kings of Ur, Erech, and Nipur seem to have extended their conquests over the neighbouring regions, but we do not know how far. The title "king of the four regions," of the north, south, east and west, is borne by Dungi, King of Ur, and by other rulers of the same city; but the inscriptions of these early times are often limited to the stamps upon the bricks of which the buildings were constructed, or to dedicatory lines upon votive objects.

The first event in Babylonian history recorded in the Hebrew books, except the foundation of the great tower, is the invasion of Syria by Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, Amraphel, King of Shinar, and their allies. As

* See above, p. 159 f.

we have already seen, Kudurmapuk—an Elamite prince, probably of the same dynasty as Chedorlaomer—calls himself “Lord of Syria” in a cuneiform inscription. This is another instance of the warlike expeditions which the kings of the Mesopotamian valleys made, all through their history, into the surrounding countries, and especially into the territories which lie upon the shores of the Mediterranean. The Elamite dynasty was overthrown by Khammurabi, the first king of the city of Babylon of whom we have monuments, who, probably not long before B.C. 2200, established the supremacy of that city in the lower valley of the Euphrates.

During the next age the States of Mesopotamia do not seem to have extended their conquests beyond the limits of that region. They were, doubtless, sufficiently occupied with wars among themselves. The kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia were now formed. The southern kingdom was ruled for many centuries by the Kassite dynasty, to which Burraburyash belonged—a prince made familiar to us by the Tell el-Amarna tablets. Of the quarrels between Assyria and Babylonia, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries before Christ, we have some knowledge through the “Synchronous History,” already quoted.* It is also hinted, in the letters of Burraburyash, that the Assyrians as well as the Canaanites attempted, from time to time, to resist the supremacy of the Egyptian power in Western Asia at this period. But the armies of the Nile were too strong, for several centuries, to allow the Babylonians or

* See above, p. 194 f.

Assyrians to overrun the principalities of Syria and Canaan, as they had done in the preceding age. From the destruction of the Hyksos until the latter days of the eighteenth dynasty, Egypt was acknowledged as mistress in Syria, and received the tribute of Tyre and Jerusalem. Then came a period of Hittite supremacy, until this was weakened by the victories of Rameses II. But the Egyptians never again ruled in Western Asia as they had done under Thothmes and Amenophis. There was a period during which the Syrian States were left to develop themselves, undisturbed by their powerful neighbours ; in this interval the Israelites took possession of Canaan, and eventually founded the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Then the armies of the Tigris and Euphrates again began to make the small States of Syria their prey from time to time ; and the treasuries of Mesopotamian cities were again filled with the spoils of Phœnicia. This period of Assyrian conquest was ushered in by Tiglath-Pileser I., who reigned about B.C. 1100. The following are the titles which this prince gives to himself in the prelude to his annals :—

“Tiglath-Pileser, the mighty king, the king of nations, without equal ; the king of the four regions of the world ; the king of all princes, the lord of lords, the king of kings ; the high priest, to whom the glorious sceptre has been given in the name of the Sun-god ; the ruler of all the subjects of the god Bel ; the true prince, whose power over all rulers is acknowledged ; the high judge, whose weapons clash in the service of the god Ashur ; whose name is called to rule over the four quarters of the world for ever ; who has carried his power like the advancing storm into the land of the enemy ; who, by the will of Bel, has no adversary, and has overthrown the enemies of Ashur.”

At the beginning of his reign, Tiglath-Pileser invaded Commagene, in North-eastern Syria, where he captured the cities, slew large numbers of the inhabitants, and carried off others into slavery. The pretext for his attack upon this nation was that they had refused to pay tribute to the god Ashur, or, in other words, to the Assyrian king himself; and this makes it probable that Commagene had already acknowledged the supremacy of Assyria in earlier reigns. Some of the troops of the invaded district fled to Shirishi, a city on the other side of the Tigris; but they were pursued by the relentless conqueror, and the city was taken and sacked. The list of booty is given, according to the general custom of the Assyrian annalists, and shows the real object for which such expeditions were undertaken. Tiglath-Pileser took into captivity the king, his wives, and his children, and carried away all his treasure of gold, silver, and bronze, and the images of his gods. The whole territory of Commagene was made part of the Assyrian Empire.

After this victory, Tiglath-Pileser led his armies into the mountainous region north of the recently-vanquished country. As far as it was possible, the Assyrians took their chariots; but when the mountain passes became too rough for the chariots, the army, with the king at their head, scaled the precipices on foot. The town of Mildish—a hill-fortress—was taken, and turned into a heap, and all its treasures were carried off.

Many of the neighbouring regions were overrun in the same way by Tiglath-Pileser, who took the cities and

carried off the booty. The land of the Hittites was invaded, and their capital, Carchemish, was captured; many of the inhabitants were slain, and the spoils that were carried off were "without number." In his invasion of the land of the Hittites, Tiglath-Pileser even reached the shores of the Mediterranean. In his own words:—

"Altogether, my hand conquered forty-two countries and their princes, from beyond the Lower Zab to beyond the Euphrates, to the land of the Hittites and the upper western sea, between the beginning of my reign and the fifth year of my government. I united the lands together, I took their hostages, and I imposed upon them the payment of tribute."

After the account of his military campaigns, Tiglath-Pileser gives us a description of his hunting expeditions. These he represents as undertaken in the service of the gods as much as his wars; and his success in both is entirely attributed to the divine assistance that he received. In the neighbourhood of the Habor—that branch of the Euphrates on which the captive Israelites were settled in later times—the Assyrian king slew ten elephants, and he also killed 920 lions in the same regions. The elephant has long disappeared from that part of the world, and the lion, though still existing, is far from common.

When the success of his campaigns allowed him to indulge in the enjoyments of peace, Tiglath-Pileser employed himself in the erection of temples to the gods, and in restoring ruined palaces and city walls throughout his kingdom. He also planted parks with cedars

and other trees that he had brought from the countries conquered by him.

The history of Tiglath-Pileser I. is the earliest account we have of a typical Assyrian monarch, such as those who, in later times, captured Samaria and besieged Jerusalem, and whose characters are so vividly drawn for us by the Hebrew writers. His activity alike in war and in peace; his desolating campaigns, during which the countries that he invaded were swept as if by a tempest, and their inhabitants and their treasures were carried off; and, in peace, his employment of his resources in erecting great palaces of brickwork and cedar, and lofty temples partly overlaid with gold and silver; the obedience that he claimed, and the tribute that he exacted—all correspond exactly to the pictures presented by the prophets and historians of Judah. The latter refer, however, to the later kings—the successors of Tiglath-Pileser I.—who, as we shall see, closely resembled him in their character and policy.

Among this monarch's successors, the first who equalled him in power and activity, so far as our information allows us to judge, was Ashur-nasir-pal, who reigned from B.C. 885 to B.C. 860. The capital city of Tiglath-Pileser was Ashur, now represented by the ruins of Kalah-Sherkat, on the Tigris, some distance south of Nineveh; it was amongst these ruins that his records were found. The capital of Ashur-nasir-pal, on the other hand, was Calah,* five hours' journey south of Nineveh, but considerably to the north of Ashur. The

* The modern Nimroud; see pp. 45, 116.

empire of the last-named monarch extended from the Mediterranean, on the west, to the lake now called Urumiah, on the east; and from Mount Ararat and the Upper Euphrates, on the north, to the Lower Zab, on the south. This is a smaller extent of territory than that which was included in the conquests of Tiglath-Pileser I., or in the empire of later monarchs. The campaigns of Ashur-nasir-pal, however, were as numerous as those of his great predecessor. Commagene was again invaded, for the purpose of receiving the tribute of that country, consisting of copper vessels, sheep, oxen, and wine. While the Assyrians were still in Commagene, news was brought to them of the rebellion of a town named Suru, where a leader of unknown extraction had been placed upon the throne, and had renounced his allegiance to the Assyrian king. Ashur-nasir-pal at once marched upon the rebellious city, and although the chief men came out to meet him and to beg for their lives, he gave the place up to plunder. All the treasures that could be collected from the palace and temple were seized: they consisted of a store of gold and silver, lead and iron, of a great number of copper vessels, of chariots and horses, garments of blue and scarlet, cedar panels, and other objects of Oriental luxury. The women and children were carried off as slaves. The rebels were punished with the greatest cruelties; many were flayed alive, others were impaled. The insurgent leader, who had made himself king, was carried to Nineveh, where he was flayed alive, and his skin exposed upon the city walls.

Not long afterwards, Ashur-nasir-pal advanced to the sources of the River Subnat, the scene of former victories of Tiglath-Pileser I. Here the last-named prince had erected his own image, as a visible token of his supremacy, according to a common custom of the Assyrian monarchs. Ashur-nasir-pal set up a figure of himself in the same way beside that of Tiglath-Pileser, and subsequently he received the tribute of the country. Certain parts of the territory, however, refused to submit to him, and he inflicted a terrible punishment upon them for their insubordination. Many cities were taken and ravaged, and the capture of the city of Tila is described by the Assyrian annalist in the following terms, in which, according to the invariable custom, the king is represented as relating his own deeds :—

“I approached the city of Tila. The city was very strong, surrounded by three walls; the inhabitants trusted in their strong walls and their numberless troops, and did not come out to embrace my feet. I stormed the city with battle and slaughter, and I took it. Three thousand warriors I laid low with my weapons. I carried off the spoils, the goods of the people, their sheep and their oxen. Many of those that were taken captive I burned with fire. Many I took alive, and cut off their hands, their noses, and their ears; I put out the eyes of many. I erected a pile of living bodies and another pile of heads. Their youths and maidens I burned in the fire. I ravaged and laid waste the city, burnt it with fire, and destroyed it. Then I ravaged the cities of Nirbi, and threw down their strong walls; I destroyed the cities, and burned them with fire.”

This is only one instance of the destruction wrought by Ashur-nasir-pal upon the cities that refused to pay him tribute or acknowledge his supremacy. He

describes many other sieges and captures in almost identical terms in the course of his annals—not omitting to mention, with a certain horrible complacency, the tortures that he inflicted on the unfortunate inhabitants, who, trusting in their own strength, had dared to dispute the sovereignty of the gods of Assyria, and had neglected to send the gifts required of them.

After a succession of conquests, Ashur-nasir-pal restored the city of Calah, where he founded a temple in honour of the god Ninib. In the sixth year of his reign he marched forth again at the head of his troops, to collect the tribute of the surrounding countries. Among the countries that he invaded was the land of the Hittites. He advanced to their capital, Carchemish, and received at their hands tribute, consisting of gold and silver, a store of copper vessels, rich garments, ivory, and chariots. All the kings of the country came and kissed his feet in token of submission, and he received hostages from them as guarantees of their fidelity.

After his triumphal passage through the land of the Hittites, Ashur-nasir-pal crossed the Orontes, and advanced as far as the shores of the Mediterranean. Here he cleansed his weapons in the waters of the Great Sea, and offered sacrifice to the gods. The kings of the Phœnician States along the coast came and brought him tribute; among them, the kings of Tyre, Sidon, Gebal or Byblus, Arvad or Aradus, offered him gold, silver, copper, linen garments, precious woods, and other valuable gifts. During his stay in Phœnicia, Ashur-nasir-pal caused a supply of cedar-wood to be cut

down on the mountains of Amanus, that he might take it back with him to Assyria, to serve in the construction of his palaces and temples.

The newly-restored city of Calah was peopled with the inhabitants of the various countries overrun by Ashur-nasir-pal in the course of his campaigns, whom he had deported into Assyria from their own native lands; exactly as Sargon peopled Samaria with Babylonians and Hittites. A new canal was dug to bring water through the town from the Upper Zab, and the neighbourhood was planted with gardens.

The following is the inscription upon the stela bearing the image of this powerful and ruthless conqueror, this typical Assyrian prince, which was found among the remains of his palace at Calah:—

“Ashurnasirpal, the great king, the mighty king, the king of hosts, the king of Assyria, son of Tukulti-Ninib, the great king, the mighty king, the king of hosts, the king of Assyria, who was son of Ramman-nirâri, the great king, the mighty king, the king of hosts, the king of Assyria. Ashurnasirpal conquered the lands from the river Tigris to the Lebanon, and to the Great Sea; he subdued under his feet all the lands from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun.”

The son of Ashur-nasir-pal was named Shalmaneser, and was the second of the name. He reigned from B.C. 860 to B.C. 825, and equalled or surpassed his father in the extent of his conquests. The very first of his expeditions was directed to the shores of the Mediterranean, where, like his father, he dipped his weapons in the sea, according to some religious rite, the meaning of which is not further explained, and he offered sacrifice

to the gods ; after which he proceeded to carry out that which was, doubtless, the chief object of the expedition, and caused his troops to cut down a supply of cedars and cypresses upon the sides of Mount Amanus. The following campaigns of Shalmaneser led him to the regions of Armenia, and afterwards to Babylonia, where the king, Marduk-nadin-shum, had been overthrown by his own brother, and had sent to Assyria for help. The assistance of the powerful armies of the northern kingdom soon restored Marduk-nadin-shum to his throne. The Assyrian records speak with much reverence of the ancient Babylonian temples which were visited by Shalmaneser, who there offered rich sacrifices to the gods. In the city of Babylon—"the bolt which fastens heaven and earth together, the seat of life"—the Assyrian monarch paid his devotions to the great god Bel, in the Temple of Bit-Saggil ; and in Borsippa he presented his gifts to Nebo, in the sanctuary of Bit-Zida. The result of this Chaldæan campaign was, of course, that the country became tributary to its mighty neighbour, and the Babylonian princes were forced to send their gifts to Assyria.

In the eleventh year of his reign, Shalmaneser carried his conquests to districts of Phœnicia and Syria that had not for many centuries lain under the Assyrian yoke. He crossed the Euphrates for the ninth time, and marched into the land of the Hittites, where he subdued no less than eighty-nine cities. Ashur-nasir-pal had received tribute from Tyre and Sidon ; but his son went as far south as Damascus and vanquished Hadade-

zer,* a Syrian king of the same name as he who had formerly fought with David. Hadadezer allied himself with twelve kings of Syria, including Ahab, king of Israel, in the hope of being able to resist the Assyrian forces by the union of their armies with his own; but they were, nevertheless, put to flight. Some years later, Shalmaneser overcame Hazael, King of Damascus, who had made a fresh attempt to oppose the Assyrian conquests. During this expedition tribute was sent to Shalmaneser, not only by the princes of Tyre and Sidon, but also by Jehu, King of Israel.

Shalmaneser II. was the first Assyrian king who conquered parts of Cilicia, and who advanced far into Armenia, and beyond Lake Urumiah, into regions that now form part of the kingdom of Persia. During every year of his reign he seems to have sent out a military expedition into some of the surrounding territories, for the purpose of enforcing the payment of tribute, or of chastising those princes who dared to resist his supremacy. But, of course, it is not necessary to suppose that he always went in person at the head of his troops; it was the flattery of the court annalists, which represented all the deeds of the Assyrian armies as the exploits of the monarch himself: just as the king, in his turn, attributes his successes to the assistance of the national divinities.

We do not hear so much in the annals of Shalmaneser of the cruelties which accompanied the Assyrian conquests; but we have an actual representation of

* Called Benhadad in the Book of Kings.

some of them in the bas-reliefs upon the bronze bands, now in the British Museum, which formerly decorated the gates of the temple at Imgur-Bel, the modern Balawat. We there see living captives impaled upon stakes outside the walls of the captured cities; and in other places the Assyrian executioner is seen in the act of hewing off the hands and feet of unfortunate prisoners, and making a pile of these ghastly trophies.

Shalmaneser II. was succeeded upon the throne of Assyria by his son, Shamshi-Ramman (B.C. 825-812). The first campaign of this prince was undertaken against Armenia. It would seem that the supremacy of the foreign suzerain never remained long undisputed in the tributary States: it was necessary for the kings of Assyria to be constantly making fresh expeditions into the countries that they had already overrun; otherwise, the supply of tributary gifts soon fell off, and the conquered princes of Syria and Armenia soon began to make alliances with one another against the hated tyrant from the Tigris. Accordingly, Shamshi-Ramman was obliged to undertake a series of campaigns into the very territories that his father had subdued before him.

The second expedition of this monarch's reign was not undertaken by him in person, as the annalist expressly tells us; but the Rabshak was sent at the head of the troops into Armenia, as the Rabshak of Sennacherib was sent to the gates of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah.

The fourth campaign of the king whose reign we are now considering led him to the conquest of

Babylonia, whence he carried off immense booty and thousands of captives. Of the royal city of one of the Chaldæan princes the records speak as follows :—

“I captured that city in the course of my expedition. I laid thirteen thousand of the warriors low with my weapons, and made their blood flow like water through the streets; I piled up their corpses into heaps. Three thousand men I took alive. I carried off from that city the royal bed, the royal couch, the treasures of the palace, the women, the goods and furniture in unnumbered quantities. I laid waste, destroyed, and burnt that city.”

The next king of Assyria, Ramman-nirari III. (B.C. 812-783), extended the Assyrian Empire even further than his father and predecessor. His titles run as follows upon a stone tablet from his palace at Calah :—

“Ramman-nirari, the great king, the mighty king, the king of hosts, the king of Assyria, who was called in his childhood by the god Ashur king of the heavenly spirits, and endowed with an empire that has no equal. From the Great Sea of the rising of the sun to the Great Sea of the setting of the sun, his hand has conquered and subdued all the regions.”

On another tablet which was formerly placed on the walls of the same palace the conquests of Ramman-nirari are thus enumerated :—

“Beyond the Euphrates, I subdued under my feet the land of the Hittites, the whole of the land of the Amorites, Tyre, Sidon, the land of Omri [that is, the kingdom of Samaria], Edom, Philistia, as far as the Great Sea of the setting of the sun, and I imposed tribute upon them. I marched against the territory of Damascus, and shut up Mari, the king, in Damascus, his royal city. The fear of the glory of Ashur, his lord, overcame him, and he embraced my feet and submitted to me. I captured in his palace in Damascus 2,300 talents of silver, 20 talents of gold, 3,000 talents of copper, 5,000

talents of iron, garments of many colours, linen, a bed of ivory, a couch inlaid with ivory, and his goods and furniture in unnumbered quantities."

In the same way, the Chaldæan princes sent their gifts to Ramman-nirari, especially from Babylon, Borsippa, and Cutha. The empire of this prince seems to have comprised all that is now called Turkey in Asia, outside the limits of Anatolia, and even parts of the latter province and of the western regions of Persia. Soon after the death of Ramman-nirari, the throne of Assyria was ascended by Tiglath-Pileser III. (B.C. 745-727), whose Babylonian name of Pul has been discussed in a former chapter. This is the first Assyrian invader of the Syrian principalities who is mentioned by name in the Bible. The reign of this prince was taken up, like those of his predecessors, with a series of military expeditions for the enforcement of tribute and the punishment of rebellious princes, but he does not seem to have enlarged the boundaries of his empire beyond those fixed by Ramman-nirari. He was accepted by the Babylonians as their king, as the royal lists tell us, and as he tells us himself, thus:—

"In Sippara, Nipur, Babylon, Borsippa, Cutha, Kish, Dilbat, and Erech, the cities that have no equal, I offered pure sacrifices to Bel, to Zirbanit, to Nebo, to Tashmit, to Nergal, the great gods, my lords, and they accepted my priestly ministrations. I subdued the broad lands of Babylonia, and exercised kingly authority over them."

Among the names of the princes who paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser in the latter part of his reign, we read those of rulers of Commagene, of Hamath, of

Byblus, of Cappadocia, of Aradus, of Ammon, of Moab, of Ascalon, of Edom, of Gaza, and—more interesting to us—of Ahaz, King of Judah. The predecessor of Ahaz, however—Azariah, or Uzziah—was powerful or fortunate enough to remain independent of the Assyrians ; some of his allies were subdued, but not himself :—

“Cities that by their sin had allied themselves with Azariah I brought back to the dominion of Assyria, and placed my officers in them as governors.”

Menahem, King of Israel, on the other hand, the contemporary of Azariah, was reckoned among the tributaries of Tiglath-Pileser, together with Resin, King of Syria.

At the end of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser, he caused Pekah, the usurping king of Israel, to be put to death, and raised Hoshea, his tributary, to the throne of Samaria. At the same time he carried off a large number of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel into captivity. He tells us himself :—

“As for the land of the House of Omri [that is, Samaria] . . . a multitude of its inhabitants, together with their possessions, I carried away to Assyria. I slew Pekah, their king ; I placed Hoshea over them [as king].”

Very soon after the establishment of Hoshea upon the throne of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser died, and was succeeded by Shalmaneser IV. (727–722), who, on account of the unfaithfulness of Hoshea and his intrigues with Egypt, caused the Assyrian armies to besiege Samaria. Before the siege had been brought to an issue, however, Shalmaneser—of whose wars we do not possess any

records in his native language—died, and was succeeded by Sargon, so that Samaria was actually taken in the reign of the latter king.

Sargon was the greatest of the Assyrian conquerors that had yet appeared. He seems to have ascended the throne through a revolution, and not to have been connected with the former royal house. In the first year of his reign Samaria was taken, and the kingdom of Israel was destroyed. During the subsequent wars of Sargon this great conqueror overran Babylonia, Elam, the northern parts of Arabia, Armenia, Commagene, Syria, and the land of the Hittites, and the country of the Philistines to the borders of Egypt. Many of the inhabitants of the conquered cities were deported into other countries: the native annals tell us that certain Arab tribes were settled by Sargon in Samaria, exactly as, according to the Book of Kings, he settled a colony of Babylonians in the same district. Other tribes were planted in other parts of Syria. He says:—

“I carried away the inhabitants of Sukkia, Bâla, Abitikna, Pappa, and Lallukna from their native country, and I settled them in Damascus and the land of the Hittites.”

In the same way, when Sargon had vanquished the people of Commagene, north of Syria, he carried them away to Assyria, and colonised their country with fresh inhabitants. The record tells us:—

“Mutallu of Commagene, a wicked man, without reverence for the name of the gods, who planned wickedness and counselled iniquity, placed his trust in Argisti, king of Ararat, a helper who could not save him; he neglected to pay the yearly tribute, and refused to

send his gifts. In the wrath of my heart, I advanced against him with my chariots and horsemen. He saw my army approach, and abandoned his city, and was no more seen. I besieged and took that city, and sixty-two other strong cities in his country. I carried away his wife, his children, his possessions, and the treasures of his palace, together with the people of his land. I did not leave one behind. I peopled that country afresh, and caused the natives of Babylonia, whom I had taken captive, to dwell in it. I placed my officer as governor over them, and laid the yoke of my rule upon them."

It was thus the general policy of Sargon—perhaps to a greater extent than of his predecessors—to carry off the inhabitants of a conquered city or district, and to people it afresh with captives from other regions. During the latter part of his reign Sargon was recognised by the Babylonians as their legitimate king; he was allowed to "take the hands of Merodach" according to the priestly rite, and he made rich offerings to the gods, including 154 talents of gold and 1,604 talents of silver. This secured him from rebellion during the rest of his reign; but as soon as his son, Sennacherib, ascended the throne of Assyria, the claims of the latter were disputed in the southern kingdom.

The reign of Sennacherib was occupied with a series of campaigns like those of his predecessors. First of all, he was engaged in fighting with Merodach-baladan in Babylonia. Then he overran the highlands of Elam. His third campaign drew him to the land of the west—to the land of the Hittites and the Phœnician sea-coast. At the news of Sennacherib's approach, Luli, or Elulæus, King of Sidon, fled beyond the sea to the island of Cyprus. After receiving the submission and tribute of

the principal cities of Phoenicia, Sennacherib laid siege to Ekron, the king of which, Padi, who had acknowledged the supremacy of Assyria, had been imprisoned by Hezekiah in Jerusalem, whither he had been sent in chains by the chief men of Ekron, who were desirous of breaking away from the Assyrian yoke. In thus rebelling against the all-powerful suzerain, the men of Ekron relied upon the help of Egypt; but this did not avail them, and the annals of Sennacherib describe their defeat thus :—

“The chief men, the officers, and the other inhabitants of Ekron, had thrown Padi, who was their king according to the laws and decrees of Assyria, into iron fetters, and had given him up, with hostile purposes, to Hezekiah the Jew, who threw him into prison. But their hearts began to fear. The princes of Egypt assembled the bowmen, chariots, and horses of the King of Ethiopia, a numberless host, and came to the help of the Ekronites. They drew up their battle array against me before Elthekeh, and raised their swords. Trusting in the god Ashur, my lord, I fought with them, and inflicted a defeat upon them. I took with my own hand the commander of the chariots and the sons of one of the princes of Egypt, as well as the commander of the chariots of the King of Ethiopia. I besieged Elthekeh and Timnath; I captured them, and carried their booty away.

“Then I returned to Ekron. I slew the chief men and officers, who had committed sin against me, and I bound their corpses on stakes around the city. I carried away into captivity those inhabitants of the city who had committed sins and iniquities against me; to the others who had committed no sin I spoke words of favour. I caused Padi, their king, to come out of Jerusalem, and to sit again upon the throne of their kingdom. I laid upon him the tribute due to my supremacy.

“As for Hezekiah the Jew, who had not submitted to my yoke, I besieged forty-six of his strong cities, and small towns without number. . . . I brought out 200,150 of the inhabitants, young and old, male and female, together with horses, mules, asses, camels,

sheep, and oxen, and I counted them as my booty. Hezekiah himself I shut up, like a caged bird, in Jerusalem, the city of his kingdom. I fortified the strongholds against him, and caused those who came out of the gates of his city to turn back. I took the cities which I had plundered away from his land, and gave them to Mitintu, King of Ashdod, Padi, King of Ekron, and the King of Gaza. To the former tribute I added the tribute which was due to my supremacy, and laid it upon him. . . . Besides 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, I caused precious stones, ivory couches, precious woods, a vast store, and his daughters and his slaves to be brought after me to Nineveh, the city of my kingdom; and he sent his officer to offer tribute and to pay submission."

The last words remind us that the capital of Assyria was now Nineveh. Sargon, the father of Sennacherib, had removed his royal residence from Calah to the newly-founded fortress of Dur-Sharrukin, or the "Fort of Sargon," now Khorsabad. Sennacherib, however, built a vast palace at Nineveh, and made this town his residence. We must remember, however, that Dur-Sharrukin and Calah were both very near to Nineveh, and were probably included in a thickly-populated district often called "the Great City of Nineveh." It is a common custom in the East, and has always been so, that each king should build a house for himself, although in Assyria and Babylonia this habit was united with a respect for the buildings of former kings, which were constantly restored by their successors.

In B.C. 699, Sennacherib made war for a second time upon the Babylonians, who would not accept his rule; and this time, after putting the native leaders to flight, he set his own son, Ashur-nadin-shum, upon the throne of Chaldaea. This prince reigned for six years.

Some of the Babylonians, however, rather than submit to an Assyrian ruler, fled across the Persian Gulf to a city on the coast of Elam. Sennacherib pursued them with ships brought from the land of Syria for that purpose; for Babylonia did not produce timber enough for the building of a navy, and hence, in later times, Alexander, as we have seen above,* had to send to Phœnicia when he thought of establishing a navy in the Persian Gulf.

In spite of Sennacherib's chastisement of these rebels, the native movement was too strong for him. His son, whom he had made King of Babylon, was captured, with the help of the Elamites, and carried into captivity in Elam. The King of Elam supported the Babylonians in setting Nergal-ushezib, a native prince, upon the throne; the latter, however, after a short reign of one year and a half, was vanquished by the Assyrians and carried off into captivity. Yet Sennacherib did not even now succeed in imposing his authority upon this rebellious nation, supported as they were by those ancient enemies of Assyria, the Elamites. The successor of Nergal-ushezib was another native prince, Mushezib-Marduk, called Mesesimordacus in the Canon of Ptolemy—a name which means “Merodach is my saviour.” After the four years' reign of this monarch there was a period of anarchy in Babylonia, similar to that which occurred at the beginning of Sennacherib's reign, although, perhaps, in both periods many of the inhabitants acknowledged the authority of Sennacherib, which he certainly

* See above, p. 312.

asserted. But during the last five years of his reign he rested from the labours of war and engaged in those of peace—namely, in the building of palaces and temples.

In B.C. 681 Sennacherib was murdered in the course of an insurrection; and when tranquillity was at length restored and the murderers had fled, his son, Esarhaddon, succeeded him. The first task of the new monarch was to invade Babylonia, where he set the kingdom in order, and was universally recognised as king; he gained the support of the priests by offering large gifts to the gods and decorating their temples; and he re-built the walls of Babylon. Esarhaddon deprived the Babylonians of the support of their chief allies by inflicting a severe defeat upon the Elamites, and putting their king to death. The reign of Esarhaddon was occupied with a series of campaigns like those of his predecessor, in the course of which he overran his extensive empire, and enforced the payment of tribute and the recognition of his supremacy. The Assyrian annalist gives us a long list of Syrian and Cypriote princes who paid tribute to Esarhaddon. Besides Manasseh, King of Judah, the list includes the names of the Kings of Tyre, Edom, Moab, Gaza, Ascalon, Ekron, Byblus or Gebal, Arvad, Ashdod; and those of Paphos, Idalium, and eight other cities in the island of Cyprus. But Esarhaddon extended the limits of his empire in one direction beyond those reached by his predecessors, for he invaded Egypt, now governed by the Ethiopian dynasty, and subdued that country under the power of Assyria. The Assyrian

supremacy over Egypt lasted under part of the next reign—that of Ashur-bani-pal, or Sardanapalus—and then ceased; only it appears from the writings of the Hebrew prophets and of Berosus that Nebuchadnezzar, who, at the end of the seventh century before Christ, succeeded to the empire of the Assyrian monarchs, invaded Egypt with success in the course of his reign.*

Esarhaddon had set up a number of princes in Egypt, as representatives of the Assyrian power, and the first expedition of his son and successor, Sardanapalus, was undertaken in order to defend these servants of his against the attack of the Ethiopian king, Tirhakah, who had proved unfaithful to his suzerain. The campaign was successful; the army of Tirhakah was defeated before Memphis, and this prince fled from Memphis to Thebes. The governors appointed by Esarhaddon were restored to their posts, among them being Necho, prince of Memphis, of the same name as the Pharaoh-nechoh who invaded Syria in the reign of Josiah, and slew the latter king at Megiddo.†

This was not the only campaign of Sardanapalus in Egypt. He undertook a second campaign against Urdamani, son of that So, or Sabaco, who had supported the Philistines against Assyria in the reign of Sargon.‡ It was during this war that the plunder of No, or Thebes, took place, which is alluded to by the prophet Nahum. Seven campaigns of Sardanapalus are described in his records as undertaken during his reign of forty-two years. Besides the conquest of Egypt, he

* See above, p. 351, note. † 2 Kings xxiii. 29. ‡ See above, p. 341.

subdued the Elamites, and placed over them a prince of his own choosing; he conquered some of the tribes in Northern Arabia, and he vanquished and put to death his own brother, Shamash-shum-ukin (in Greek, Saosduchinos, or Sammuges), who had been placed on the throne of Babylon by the will of his father, Esarhaddon; in the west he vanquished the Phœnicians and some of the nations of Asia Minor. Many of the natives of the conquered countries were carried away to Assyria or to other countries, where they replaced the former inhabitants, for Sardanapalus continued to follow the practice of deportation so characteristic of the political methods of his nation.

With Sardanapalus the days of Assyrian supremacy are over. Of his two successors we know little, except the Greek tradition about the effeminacy of the last king, Saracus, or Sin-shar-ishkun, for whose name they so frequently substitute that of Sardanapalus; although some of their writers were aware of the warlike character of Ashur-bani-pal, whom they distinguish as Sardanapalus the First. With the end of the seventh century before Christ, came the fall of Nineveh and the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire, the bulk of which passed into the power of the kings of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar carried on the traditions of conquest handed down to him from his predecessors, the kings of Assyria; he overran the countries of Western Asia, enforced the payment of tribute, and deposed or slew the princes who refused to acknowledge his supremacy; and he carried away whole nations into

captivity, like Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, or Sardanapalus. The native records of his reign that have already been found, however, are not occupied with the wars, but with the buildings of Nebuchadnezzar, and we still await the discovery of an account in cuneiform characters of the taking of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews into Babylonia.

The accounts that have been given above of the course of conquest which attended the development of the Assyrian power are meant to illustrate the passages in the prophets and historians of Judah which allude to the extensive conquests of the Assyrians, to their warlike and ruthless character, and to their peculiar methods of warfare. These accounts enable us to understand, as we could not do before the decipherment of the inscriptions, what the passages of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, and Zephaniah mean, which speak of the Assyrian and Babylonian armies, of the terror which they inspired, of the devastation which followed in their track. They show that the carrying off of the people of Samaria and of Judah was part of a settled policy, followed by the rulers of the Assyrian Empire, to enforce absolute submission, and to ensure the receipt of the tribute, which was the real object of their expeditions. Is not the course of conquest in Syria pursued by the Assyrians from the days of Tiglath-Pileser the First to the time of Sardanapalus, and described by the cuneiform inscriptions, accurately epitomised in the following words of Isaiah?—

"Thou hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees [or cypresses] thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.

"I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.

"Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps.

"Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up."

In the words of Hezekiah, "the kings of Assyria had laid waste all the nations and their countries."

It was not until the discovery and interpretation of the native records taught us how terrible a scourge Assyria had been for many centuries to the surrounding nations that we are able fully to understand the exultation that was felt when the rumour of the fall of Nineveh first reached the ears of men:—

"There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" *

* Nahum iii. 19.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CULTURE OF ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA.

THE cities of Nineveh and Babylon are represented to us by the Hebrew writers of the seventh and sixth centuries before Christ as being wealthy and luxurious beyond all others of their time. They were the great centres of trade and civilisation, from which the rest of the world purchased, or which they imitated in arts and refinements. The merchants of Nineveh were "multiplied above the stars of heaven." When the Chaldæans and Medes destroyed Nineveh, Babylon succeeded to the high place formerly occupied by the latter as the capital of Western Asia and the centre of the commerce of that region—then, with Egypt, the most civilised in the world. Babylon was a "city of merchants"; she was "abundant in treasures"; she is compared to a "golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunken." The concourse of strangers and of traders from foreign countries to Babylon was so great that it is said that "all nations flowed together unto it."

The palaces of the kings of Assyria at Nineveh are described as being roofed with cedar, and filled with gold and silver and an endless store of "pleasant furniture." The city was strongly fortified with brick walls.

As for the buildings of Babylon, they are said to have mounted up to heaven, and the fortifications were thought to be impregnable.

The gorgeous array of the Assyrian and Babylonian horsemen is described by Ezekiel, who speaks of the Assyrian captains and rulers, "clothed most gorgeously with blue, all of them desirable young men, riding upon horses"; and of the Babylonians, "girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity."

The mighty armies of Assyria and Babylonia—which were the terror and scourge of Western Asia from the eleventh to the sixth century before Christ—are described as being numerous like a swarm of caterpillars. The troops of horsemen thundered through the streets of captured cities, and the multitude of chariots jostled and rattled as they entered the gates, making the hearts of the inhabitants tremble at the approach of cruel death or slavery. "Engines of war" and battering-rams were employed in sieges; mounds were cast up and forts erected before the walls of beleaguered towns. The arts of war had been brought to greater perfection by the Assyrians and Babylonians than by any of their contemporaries.

All these points of Assyrian and Babylonian culture, described or alluded to by the Hebrew historians and prophets, are illustrated by the cuneiform inscriptions or by archæological discoveries on the Mesopotamian

sites. Of the great wealth of Nineveh we have ample proof in the lists of spoil captured by the Assyrian kings, and the records of tribute paid to them by foreign princes. Some of these have been quoted in former chapters. The amount of gold and silver that must have been stored in the Assyrian palaces seems to us at the present day almost incredible. It was remarked, indeed, before the decipherment of the Assyrian inscriptions, that the farther back we go into the history of Western Asia, the greater are the stores of precious metal recorded to have been collected by the princes of that region. The riches of Damascus captured by David, and those of David's own son, Solomon, are instances of this. The fame of the wealth amassed by the ancient kings of Nineveh and Babylon was handed down to the Greeks, some of whom have left us records of what they heard or read on this subject. Sardanapalus, especially, was famous as the wealthiest and most luxurious prince that had ever reigned. The city of Ecbatana, in Media, whither the treasures of Nineveh were transferred after its capture, became, in its turn, one of the wealthiest in the world; and the subsequent conquest of Ecbatana by Cyrus enriched the poverty-stricken tribe of the Persians. Babylon was still more renowned for its wealth. The value of the treasures of its temples, the golden images and furniture, are estimated by Herodotus and Ctesias at an almost incredible amount. According to the former and more moderate of the two historians, the statue of Bel-Merodach, in his great temple of Bit-Saggil, together with its golden pedestal, table, and

throne, was composed of 800 talents of the precious metal ; and this was only one of many golden images. Even under the Achæmenian kings, Babylon remained the richest city in the Persian Empire, and its rank in this respect was handed on to Seleucia and Ctesiphon. " Babylonian gold " was well known among the Romans.

The lists of spoil and tribute given us by the Assyrian annalists show us what were the principal articles of culture and luxury among the nations of Western Asia of their time. Besides the stores of gold and silver in disks, bars, or wedges—for there was no coinage—we read of vessels of various kinds made of the precious metals or, more frequently, of copper. In the records of Ashur-nasir-pal, for instance, there is frequent mention of "copper caldrons," or "copper dishes," coming next to the amount of gold and silver captured from some town, or received as tribute from some prince of Syria or Commagene. Some of these very copper dishes, perhaps, are now in the British Museum, which possesses a small store of such vessels, found by Sir Henry Layard among the remains of Ashur-nasir-pal's palace at Nimroud, the ancient Calah. The copper in use throughout Western Asia was probably introduced by Phœnician trade, and most of it must have come from Cyprus—from the Phœnician colonies in that island. But not only the material of these copper dishes of which we now speak is from Phœnicia ; the workmanship also is Phœnician. They are not of pure copper, but of bronze, a tenth part of

tin being added for the purpose of strengthening the copper. The tin also must have come to Asia through the enterprise of the Phœnician merchants, who obtained it from the west of Europe; so that possibly some of the tin used to manufacture the vessels which eventually found their way to the palace of the great king at Nineveh may have come from the mines of our own barbarous island. The ornaments, either stamped in *repoussé* or engraved upon these dishes,

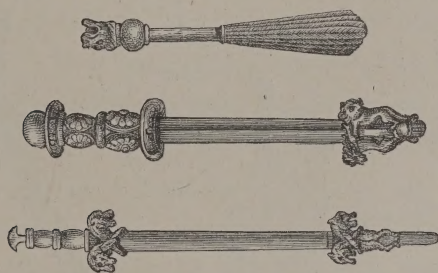


ASSYRIAN VESSEL.

betray their Phœnician origin by the mixture of Egyptian and Assyrian designs, so characteristic of a nation which had no original art of its own; but if there were any doubt of this, it would be allayed by the fact that Phœnician inscriptions are also to be found on some of the vessels. The designs often consist of concentric bands of rosettes and symmetrical festoons of figures; we find forms such as the winged scarabæus, or the sphinx of Egypt, or the images of the goddess Hathor or the god Bel. Some of the dishes are incrustated with gold or silver. Similar dishes, undoubtedly of Phœnician workmanship, have been discovered in Cyprus, and even in Italy, where the Phœnicians had colonies. Besides these artistically decorated dishes, the Assyrians employed the copper which they obtained as spoil or tribute, or purchased through trade, in the more homely manufacture of household vessels and utensils of every kind. Specimens of these have been found among the ruins. Chairs and couches were also

made of bronze, and these were worked into shapes of much elegance; some remains of bronze furniture of this sort have also been discovered among the excavations.

The household furniture of the Assyrians, whether of bronze, ivory, or wood, is fully illustrated in the bas-reliefs from their palaces. The forms which the workmen imitated in their designs are borrowed from the animal and vegetable worlds. The lion was especially copied in the decorative arts of Assyria; he



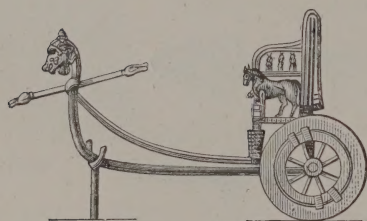
ASSYRIAN FLY-FLAP AND SWORDS.

was then common in the country, and appeared as a symbol of strength and majesty; hence, lions' heads and lions' claws ornament the feet of the tables and the arms of the chairs, as well as the hilts of swords and the poles of standards. But there is much variety of ornament to be seen in the productions of the industrial artists of Assyria: goats, panthers, and bulls supply motives; and from the vegetable world, flowers and leaves, the lotus and the palm, are seen, arranged in elegant combinations; besides geometrical designs, rosettes, interlacing lines, and other figures.

One of the most elaborate pieces of furniture repre-

sented in the bas-reliefs is the throne upon which Sen-nacherib sits before the walls of Lachish, while the Jewish captives pass before him. The horizontal bars of this throne are supported by three rows of human figures, one above the other, and are themselves elaborately sculptured, as well as the feet and the accompanying footstool.

The chariots of the Assyrians, the multitudes of which struck such terror into the hearts of re-



ASSYRIAN CHARIOT.



ASSYRIAN TIARA.

bellious vassals and tributaries, were built of wood, adorned with elegant work in metal. The form of the chariot closely resembled that in use among the Greeks and Romans. The body, which was of light wicker-work, was semicircular in shape, and open at the back; it was very small, and could only contain the warrior and his charioteer; at the sides were richly-decorated cases, like quivers, to contain the arrows required in the combat. The form of the pole shows much artistic fancy and skill; it was exceedingly slender and gracefully curved, and it terminated in the head of an animal or a bird; and from this head, bent gracefully

backwards, a broad strip of embroidered leather was stretched to the body of the chariot, above the pole, in order to keep the horses more completely from touching one another.

The Assyrian soldiers covered their heads with bronze helmets, specimens of which are to be seen in our museums; at least seven different forms of the helmet have been identified, and most of them are ornamented by a crest at the top. Some of the soldiers wore leather tunics, and others protected themselves more efficaciously from the weapons of the enemy by coats of mail. The bronze shields which they carried were often almost as highly ornamented as that of Achilles: at least they were covered with elaborate designs in *repoussé*; and there is one at the British Museum adorned with concentric processions of lions and bulls. The weapons with which the Assyrians were armed were the bow and arrows, the spear, the sword, and the club. The arrow-heads, the spear-heads, and the swords had sometimes a nucleus of iron coated with bronze, and were sometimes entirely of the stronger, but rarer, metal. Bronze was also largely used for all sorts of minor works of art, such as statuettes of gods and genii or of the Assyrian kings, and weights—in the form of couching lions—which were used in commerce. Many of the last bronze monuments have been found, of various weights and sizes; and since they have the amount of the weight to which they correspond marked upon them in Assyrian, and also sometimes in Aramaic characters, they enable

us to know in the most authentic manner the exact value of the Assyrian talent, maneh, and shekel in the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries before Christ. One such weight, in the form of a lion, weighing "two royal manehs," is the only contemporary monument we possess of Shalmaneser IV., the invader of Samaria, whose name is also marked upon it.

The standards of the Assyrians are frequently represented in the bas-reliefs which supply us with scenes from their campaigns. Jeremiah speaks of the standards carried by the armies of Western Asia, and bids the enemies of Babylon "set up the standard upon the walls" of that city, and to "set up a standard in the land" to call together the nations against her. The Assyrian standards were formed of a pole, having at the summit a disk of bronze, the surface of which was decorated with symbolical figures; the figure of the god Ashur, drawing his bow against his enemies, stood between the two diverging streams of the Euphrates and Tigris, on each side of which were figures of oxen. The pole of the standard was further decorated with bulls' heads and lions' heads, arranged alternately along it.

The degree of excellence to which the Assyrians carried the art of working in bronze is best shown by the bands of that metal which decorated the gates at Balawat. These bands are nine inches broad, and decorated in *repoussé* with scenes from the campaigns of Shalmaneser II.;* the figures are, of course, very

* See page 367 ff.

small, and are executed with great skill. An immense number of figures enter into the decoration, for the bands are divided in two by a horizontal row of rosettes running along the middle; and above as well as below this band are a series of representations of battles, marches, sieges, reception of tributaries, and punishments of prisoners. Besides the human figures, the chariots and horses, the rivers, mountains, trees, and



ASSYRIAN KING WITH PRISONERS.

walls are carefully reproduced, on a very small scale and with much knowledge and skill. These bronze bands were nailed on the wooden gates at intervals, so that they formed a series of horizontal lines across it.

Nothing is more carefully represented in the Assyrian bas-reliefs than the clothing of the king and his officers. They wear most gorgeous garments, stiff and heavy with embroideries of the most various designs, which often entirely cover the material * of which

* The Babylonians wore a long linen tunic, and over that an upper garment of wool. It may be supposed that silk, coming from China through India, was also occasionally worn (Ezek. xvi. 10, 13).

the dress is made; and their head-dresses are no less elaborately decorated. They are, in fact, the Chaldæan horsemen, captains and rulers, "dressed most gorgeously," and "exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads," whom Aholah and Aholibah saw and loved in the allegory of Ezekiel. It corresponds to this gor-



SENNACHERIB ON HIS
THRONE.

geousness of apparel in ancient Mesopotamia and Syria that, among the spoils and tribute of the Assyrian kings, many-coloured garments and garments of blue-purple and red-purple are so frequently mentioned. According to Ezekiel, the Assyrian captains were dressed in "blue" or bluish-purple; and the very word (Hebrew *t'keléth*, Assyrian *takiltu*) frequently occurs in the lists of spoil or tribute received by the Assyrian monarchs during their campaigns; the Septuagint and the Vulgate render

the word by "hyacinthine,"* thus showing of what shade the colour was. There were two kinds of purple known to the western Asiatics during those early ages—the reddish-purple and the bluish-purple, which are constantly mentioned together in the Assyrian records; as, for instance, in the list of Hezekiah's tribute, quoted above.† The two colours are also

* That is to say, probably, of a colour approaching that of the hyacinth-stone or sapphire.

† See page 377.

mentioned together in passages of the Old Testament: as, for instance, in the description of the Tabernacle (Exodus xxv. 4, xxvi. 1), and in the description of the palace of Xerxes at Susa (Esther i. 6). The reddish-purple (Hebrew *argámân*, Assyrian *argamânu*) was more properly the purple colour; it is translated "purple" in our version, as well as in the Septuagint and Vulgate. It was this reddish-purple that was borrowed by the Western nations as the proper colour of royal and imperial robes. The Roman emperors adopted this as their colour. What the exact tint of the imperial robes was we may conclude from the "purple" stone—the porphyry—which was also held to be imperial in colour, and to represent the colour of the emperor's toga. Some of the later Roman statues have the head of white marble and the dress of porphyry, with the intention of reproducing the actual colour of the robe; and as it was fitting that those born in the purple should also be buried in the purple, the sarcophagus of some of the rulers of the Roman world was also carved out of the purple stone.

The Popes, after the Gothic invasion of Italy, became in many ways the successors of the Roman emperors, and therefore they adopted the imperial purple: thus the papal mantle is at the present day a survival of the purple toga of the Cæsars, and different shades of the imperial colour were conceded to cardinals and bishops. The crimson robes of European sovereigns have a similar origin; and thus the "reddish-purple" worn by Oriental princes and great men in ancient days

has, to some degree, retained its significance to the present time.

As we have seen, the Assyrian robes of hyacinth and purple, or blue and crimson, were richly embroidered. It is worth while to remark some of the designs which these embroideries show ; for many of them had a religious significance, and many survived in Oriental embroideries down to the Middle Ages, if not to the present day. The robes of Ashur-nasir-pal show designs such as the sacred tree, guarded by genii, and symbolical animals vanquished by gods or fighting with one another, besides flowers, rosettes, and other figures that may have become purely decorative. It seems not unlikely, however, that all these designs were, in the first instance, intended to act as charms or talismans, which should protect the wearer and attract the favour of the deity to him, and that in process of time they lost their meaning and became mere ornaments—as they certainly did when they spread to foreign countries, or were handed down to later times when new religions had been introduced. The combats between animals—such as the attack of the lion upon the bull or antelope—were handed down through the Persians to the artists of Constantinople and to the Arabs, and may be seen in mediæval embroideries, such as the imperial robes at Vienna. We have already seen how great a demand there was for Babylonian embroideries under the Roman Empire ; the representations of them on the bas-reliefs discovered in Mesopotamia during this century fully illustrate and explain the beauty of the work upon which so high a value was set.

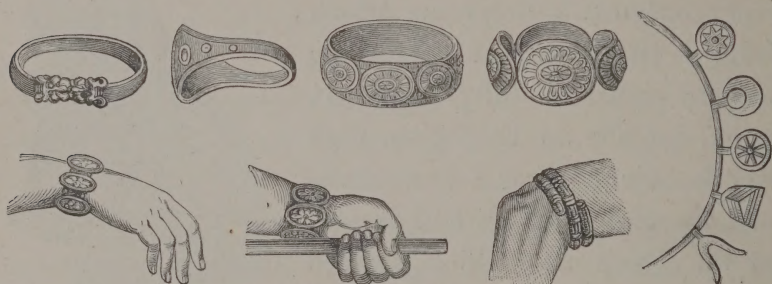
A substance which is frequently named in the lists of tribute and spoil is ivory; we read of tusks of ivory, and also of furniture incrustated with ivory, such as couches and thrones. Some examples of the ivory ornaments possessed by the Assyrians have been found in Ashur-nasir-pal's palace at Nimroud, and appear, like the bronze dishes, to be of Phœnician workmanship; for they show the same intermixture of Egyptian with Assyrian designs. Among these ivory ornaments are some which formed the cover of a casket; their designs, skilfully carved in relief, include an Ethiopian, with woolly hair, holding a lotus-stalk, and a woman, with her hair dressed in the Egyptian fashion, framed in a window with a balustrade of Egyptian form. In some of the ivory incrustations of furniture, the main material is inlaid with coloured glass.



ASSYRIAN HEAD-STALLS.

The name of the last substance has not been recognised with certainty in the cuneiform inscriptions, but many glass vessels have been found among the Assyrian ruins. The most remarkable of these is thought to be of Phœnician workmanship, and is the oldest piece of transparent glass known to us, so far as we can judge. It bears its own date upon itself, for it exhibits the words "Palace of Sargon" upon its surface, and must, therefore, have been manufactured in the latter years of the seventh century before Christ.

The Assyrians lavished decoration upon everything with which they were surrounded. The leather harness and trappings of their horses are elaborately embroidered; the head-stall is decorated with metal or ivory studs and with a profusion of tassels, and hung with bells. Of their jewellery, the excavations have naturally furnished few examples, because the precious metals were seized by the conquerors many centuries ago. Necklaces of gold and of precious stones have been found at



ASSYRIAN JEWELLERY.

Khorsabad, and a few earrings and bracelets have been disinterred. On the other hand, we learn much from the bas-reliefs about the jewellery of the Assyrians. The king and his attendants wear necklaces, earrings, and bracelets of various and elegant forms. The monarch also wears a golden diadem around his embroidered tiara. The bracelets are often wound two or three times round the arm, and are ornamented with animals' heads at their extremities; or they are simple bands decorated with rosettes.*

* The advanced state of refinement reached by the Assyrians is illustrated by the attention which they paid to their own persons. Instances of this are the elaborately curled wigs and false beards worn by the king, and the carefully crisped hair of his attendants.

Of the cylindrical seals mentioned by Herodotus as worn by every Babylonian, and employed to make impressions upon the clay documents, in place of signature, nothing need be said, for they are the commonest and best known of all the monuments of Assyria and Chaldæa. The skill with which, in the best periods, they are engraved is another instance of the high culture of the Assyrians and Babylonians during the latter centuries of their supremacy.

The excavations of the present century have enabled us to form a fair idea of the form and decoration of the Assyrian palaces, and of the skill attained by the inhabitants of Nineveh and Calah in architecture and the arts which accompany it. The palaces stood on immense platforms, built of clay and sun-baked bricks, sometimes faced with limestone, and designed to raise them above the plain: both for the sake of adding dignity to the royal residence, and of protecting it from the injurious action of the periodical floods. The summit of the platform which supported the palace of Sargon at Dur-Sharrukin, the modern Khorsabad, was nearly twenty-five acres in area; and the mass of material brought together to form it is estimated at forty-eight millions of cubic feet. On a bas-relief of the time of Sennacherib we see a body of captives engaged in constructing a similar platform for the palace of Nineveh; and the king himself, attended by his officers, sometimes came in person to inspect the work of construction.

The platform was reached by staircases, besides

which there was an ascent on an inclined plane for horses and chariots. The upper surface was paved with burnt bricks, and it was surrounded by a rampart of brick or stone. Upon the terrace, or platform, rose the structure of the palace itself, consisting of a large number of chambers arranged round different courtyards. The palace of Sargon contained no less than two hundred and nine large rooms. The walls were built of baked or crude bricks, and probably the rooms were often roofed with a solid vaulting or dome of bricks and clay. Two rooms in Sargon's palace were no less than forty-four feet square, and must have been covered by domes. Indeed, some fragments of the vaulting which had fallen into the chambers, but had partly retained their form, were actually found by the excavators. Many of the rooms were long, but narrow, in order to afford a firmer support for the vaulted roof. Other rooms must have been roofed with cedar beams brought from the Lebanon, for fragments of such beams have been discovered; and it will be remembered what an extensive employment of cedar from the Amanus and Lebanon was made by the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs, who sometimes seem to have sent expeditions solely for the purpose of cutting down the trees upon those mountain ranges. This plunder of the mountain-sides is what the prophet alludes to in the following words, referring to the death of the King of Babylon, who, in his Phœnician campaign, had followed the example of his Assyrian predecessors:—

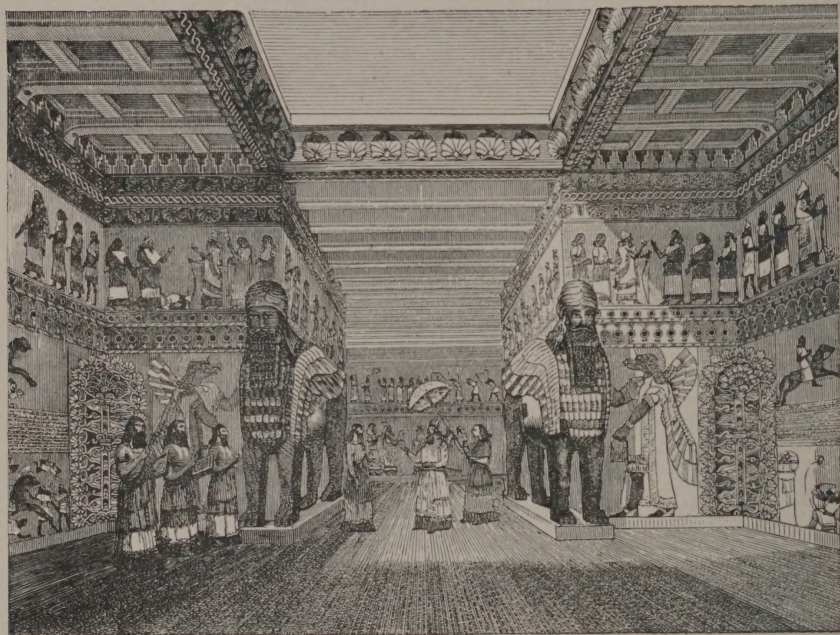
"Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us." *

The Assyrian palaces seem to have been divided into three principal parts, like the royal residences of more recent times in the East. There were the king's own apartments, and the rooms for official business and receptions; there was the harem, or part allotted to the women of the royal palace; and lastly, there was the division which included the offices and the lodgings of the household slaves and of the king's guards. Besides smaller courts, there were three courtyards of especially large extent, into which the principal chambers of the three divisions opened. The harem communicated with the rest of the house by two doors only. Some of the courts were probably surrounded by a colonnade of slender wooden pillars, sometimes cased with bronze; and in some cases there was, without doubt, a second storey above the lower rooms.

Many traces have been found of the decorations of the palaces. The walls of the court-yards were sometimes lined with enamelled tiles, decorated with human figures or with ornamental designs in colour. The finest of such tiles were those over the doorway forming the principal entrance at Khorsabad, where they covered the archivolt. The ground of this semicircular border of glazed bricks was of a bright blue; and upon this were figures of winged genii, in white and yellow, divided by rosettes; the upper and lower edges of

* Isaiah xiv. 8.

the archivolt showed white bands and rows of white rosettes. The decoration with enamelled tiles in the Assyrian palaces was only inferior to that of the



IMAGINARY RESTORATION OF ASSYRIAN PALACE.

Persian palaces, of which we have already heard. The palace of Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon, although it has been so imperfectly examined, is known to have been partly faced with enamelled tiles, fragments of which have been discovered, decorated with designs of animals and flowers in colours. The Babylonians appear to have invented the glazed bricks with designs in relief, which were imitated by the Persians at Susa.

Tiles from Ashur-nasir-pal's palace at Calah show the king himself, attended by his officers, pouring out a libation.

The chambers of the palaces were internally decorated with bas-reliefs carved on thin slabs of alabaster, which lined the walls from the floor to a considerable height. Some of these are the principal examples of Assyrian art that have reached Europe, and the large collection of them at the British Museum is well known to everyone. These bas-reliefs are sculptured with scenes from the history of the kings of Assyria; principally with their wars, but also with their hunting expeditions and their building operations. The earliest are those from the palace of Ashur-nasir-pal, and the latest those of Sardanapalus; so that we are enabled to trace the progress of Assyrian sculpture from the beginning of the ninth century before Christ to the end of the seventh. It is not difficult to detect a very considerable advance in correctness and delicacy of execution during that period.

The treatment of the human figure, although it improves, remains stiff and conventional to the last; but the drawing of the animals in the reign of Sardanapalus is so true to life that it has perhaps hardly been surpassed at the present day.

It is in the treatment of composite scenes that the defects of Assyrian art are above all apparent. There is an entire absence of perspective, and often a complete disregard of the relative size of objects, so that men are taller than their horses, and even than the

walls of the fortresses which they are besieging.* By a common device in ancient art, the principal personages of a scene are represented as taller than the rest; the king, for instance, appears as a giant among his subjects, exactly as he does in the Egyptian paintings and bas-reliefs. On the other hand, it was in the treatment of details that the sculptors of Nineveh and Calah excelled. All the minute ornament that was lavished on the dress and furniture of the Assyrians is elaborately reproduced in the sculptures. We have already remarked how much can be learnt from them about embroidery, upholstery, jewellery, and the rest of the industrial arts, and this is for the reason now given—because of the excessive attention to minute detail on the part of the artists.

Above the line of the bas-reliefs, the Assyrian chambers were decorated by paintings on the stucco; for the bare brickwork was nowhere allowed to be seen. Such paintings appear to have consisted, like those on the enamelled tiles, of symbolical figures of animals and genii, interspersed with decorative figures, such as rosettes, pine-cones, and geometrical designs, bordered by rows of battlements or guilloches. The same sort of decoration was applied to the vaulted ceilings; but sometimes the chambers, instead of being vaulted, were “ceiled with cedar and painted with vermillion.” The bas-reliefs which have just been described were also originally painted so that they harmonised with the coloured decoration above them; traces of blue and ver-

* See page 9.

million may still be detected on many parts of these sculptured slabs in our museums, although, for the most part, the colouring has been rubbed off or has faded away.

The floors of the Assyrian palaces were paved with bricks, but they were covered in ancient times with rich carpets, representations of which are to be seen in the carved alabaster thresholds which lay outside some of the doors. These thresholds are probably copied from the carpets which lay inside the doors. Those that have been found are decorated with a number of squares symmetrically arranged, and separated by borders of rosettes; the squares contain a rosette in the centre, from which four pine-cones diverge towards the four corners; between the cones are lotus-flowers or tulips. The border of the whole carpet is formed of a series of cones and lotus-flowers, placed alternately. Nothing can exceed the charming effect of these designs as a decoration of the floor.

The principal entrances were closed with cedar doors, bound with bronze, and turning on pivots in stone sockets. The entrances of the chambers had embroidered curtains hung before them.

It might be expected that as the Assyrians reached such excellence in sculpture, they would have adorned their residences with statues as well as bas-reliefs. That they did not do so is chiefly, or entirely, to be attributed to the want of stone suitable for sculpture in the round; for the alabaster or gypsum of which the sculptured slabs were made is found in thin layers, and is extremely

soft and friable in its nature—hence, although well suited for the bas-reliefs, it was not fit material for statues. Some attempts at carving statues were made, however, and the British Museum possesses a standing figure of Ashur-nasir-pal, which, by its defects, shows what the cause was for which such works were not more often executed; the arms and hands are held close to the body, and the hair and beard are imperfectly finished, to avoid the chance of breaking. Besides this, there are two rough statues of the god Nebo, also of the ninth century; and at Khorsabad there were found two columns in the form of human figures, like the Caryatides of the Erechtheum.

The main entrances of the palaces were guarded on each side by the immense human-headed bulls or lions with which we are so familiar; but these monsters are never entirely disengaged from the blocks out of which they are carved; on account of the softness of the gypsum and the danger of breakage, one side of the block is always left, and the other side alone is sculptured into the form required. The plain part of the block was, of course, built into the wall of the gateway, and the winged bulls and lions formed the inner sides of the entrance: so they faced the visitor as he arrived, and he passed between them on his way into the courtyard of the palace. We all know the form of these monsters: their immense wings, on which every feather is so carefully carved, and their terrible countenances crowned by the embroidered tiara, with horns on each side, as a conventional mark of their super-terrestrial nature.

It must surely be a proof that the motive of the Assyrian artists was less artistic than religious that so many of their sculptures—not only the winged bulls, but also the bas-reliefs and statues—are partly covered with inscriptions, which, to a considerable degree, spoil the artistic effect. The fact is that the sculptures, like the writing upon them, were not, in the first instance, executed for the sake of beauty, but as monuments before gods and men of the religious devotion of the monarch on the one hand, and of his power and greatness on the other; and thus they attracted the favour of the heavenly powers, and also impressed a suitable lesson of submission upon the rest of mankind. In these inscriptions the monarch records his execution of the will of the gods by his punishment of their enemies: that is to say, his military campaigns, in which he extorted tribute from the surrounding nations, and severely chastised those who were slow to pay it.

The art of writing and the practice of literature in Assyria and Babylonia were, without doubt, in the first instance the invention of the priests, in whose hands they remained, to a great extent, down to the final decay of their religious system. The beginning of the cuneiform writing took place among a non-Semitic nation—the Sumerians or Accadians; but we hardly know it except as borrowed by their Semitic neighbours, who so early obtained the upper hand in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates. The Bible says little about the literature of Babylonia or Assyria. Only, when Isaiah speaks of the star-gazers

and enchanters, he of course implies the existence of an astrological and magical literature, such as we can now actually study on the clay tablets in the British Museum. Again, when Sennacherib boasts of the exploits of his ancestors, and asks, "Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed?" he implies the existence of the records upon the clay cylinders and tablets, in which, as we now know, the Assyrian kings read of the deeds of their predecessors, to which they so often allude in their own annals. The Book of Daniel alone speaks directly of the "learning of the Chaldeans," by which the lore of the astrologers and of the interpreters of omens would seem, above all, to be intended. The great collection of texts referring to omens and their interpretation forms one of the most important parts of the Assyrian and Babylonian literature now stored in the British Museum, and much of it is concerned with dreams and their explanation. This part of Assyrian literature is, however, one of the most difficult to understand; yet it may be hoped that before many years it will be translated with as great accuracy as the historical inscriptions.* Of the astrological and astronomical literature of the Babylonians mention has been made in a former chapter; it was with this branch of learning that the astrologers of Nebuchadnezzar's court were occupied—the Book of Daniel speaks of them in several places. There seems, to judge from the cuneiform inscriptions,

* Dr. Bezold's catalogue of the cuneiform inscriptions is doing much towards the interpretation of the omen-tablets.

to have been a chief astronomer, or Astronomer Royal, whose business it was to make periodical reports to the king concerning the phenomena of the heavens, such appearances being considered of the greatest importance for the conduct of political affairs.

Isaiah, as we have seen, alludes to the Babylonian magicians or sorcerers, and the Book of Daniel also speaks of them. A large number of the incantations which these sorcerers employed are now preserved in the British Museum. Like the omen-texts, they do not come from Babylon, but from Nineveh, where they formed part of the library of Sardanapalus. There is little doubt, however, that all this literature was borrowed from Babylonia, and, in fact, originally taken from the Accadian inhabitants of that region, who handed on their religion and their magic to the people of Semitic race who eventually ruled their country. The Babylonian enchanters were especially employed to charm away diseases, and many of the texts in the library of Sardanapalus contain the formulas that were repeated over the sick, and the directions for the compounding of magical drinks which were to put the disease to flight. The Chaldæan magicians, who, besides the astrologers of the same nationality, infested various parts of the Roman Empire in later days, claimed the same power over sickness, and there are several stories in Greek and Latin literature of supposed cures performed by this class of impostors. Iamblichus gives an account of a girl, thought to be dead, who was restored to life by a Chaldæan.

Yet it would seem not improbable that the Chaldæan magic had a good result. The use of magical herbs gradually led to a discovery of the real medical properties of some among them, and so, as Chaldæan astrology finally brought into existence the science of astronomy, in the same way Chaldæan magic brought into existence the science of medicine. Some of the cuneiform inscriptions already appear to contain partly medical prescriptions mixed up with magical practices.

This ancient sorcery of the Accadians and Babylonians was, like the other branches of their lore, the property of the priests, and closely connected with religion. It is another example of the connection of religion in the earliest times with all the manifestations of social energy and all the efforts of civilization. In a society in which the king was high priest, and war was undertaken solely in the service of the gods, we cannot be surprised to find all branches of learning also in the hands of the priesthood, and all branches of art proceeding from a religious motive.

The library of Sardanapalus also contains many specimens of purely religious literature in the form of prayers and hymns which were repeated during the religious solemnities; and one or two specimens of these have been given above. But the branch of Assyrian and Babylonian literature which still interests us most is the historical branch—the records of the kings, of which such a number have been found. The principal historical documents are the inscribed slabs which lined

the walls of the palaces in parts, including the bas-reliefs partly covered with inscriptions, of which we have spoken, and the clay cylinders.

The latter are a remarkable phenomenon among literary documents, for it is quite clear that they were not written, as history is written now, simply for the purpose of recording events for the instruction of later times. They were not put up on the walls or stored in libraries, but they were buried in cavities made for them at the corners of palaces or temples; and they contained careful instructions to those who, in the event of the ruin or restoration of the temple, might find them to restore them to their places with religious rites, sacrificing victims and pouring out oil. They were therefore intended to be read only in case of the restoration of the building; and if the latter took place, they gave to the restorer full information about the original builder, with details of his campaigns and hunting expeditions, and an account of his erection of the structure in question. In this way they ensured full credit for the builder, and removed the possibility of the restorer's taking to himself credit which did not rightfully belong to him. Fearful curses were invoked on those who should fail to preserve the record of the true builder; and, accordingly, the restorer not only obeyed the instructions to place the cylinder back in its place, but also scrupulously named the original builder in his own records, and took no more credit to himself than was due to him for his restorations. These rules of architectural etiquette are seen to have been observed

by Nabonidus* in particular, and are illustrated by passages in his annals, as well as in those of former kings. Thus architecture was undertaken in the service and under the sanction of religion, like the other branches of art. This is true not only, as we might expect, in the case of the erection of temples, but also in the construction of royal palaces, fortresses, and city walls. The king was the servant and representative of the gods, and his city and his house were protected and favoured by them, as well as their own dwellings, the temples.

We know hardly anything of Assyrian or Babylonian music, as, from the nature of the case, it might be expected. Only in some of the bas-reliefs we see musicians, with various stringed and wind instruments—"harps and organs" †—who came out to welcome the conqueror at the head of his army, and who took part in religious rites. When Sardanapalus offered to the gods the lions that he had slain in his hunting expeditions, and poured oil and wine over them, musicians accompanied the rite with their music, and probably hymns in Accadian were sung. Quintus Curtius speaks of the Babylonian priests singing hymns when they went out to meet Alexander.‡ The prophet Isaiah speaks of the pomp of the king of Babylon and of the "noise of his viols." And the well-known passage of Daniel gives an enumeration of the instruments employed in honour of the golden image, when the sounds of "all kinds of music" were the signal for the worshippers to fall upon their knees.

* See page 143 ff.

† Genesis iv. 21.

‡ See page 18.

An immense number of the Babylonian inscriptions brought to England are commercial and legal documents, and have already been spoken of.* These bear witness to the great wealth of the country, to its commercial activity and its financial developments, to the riches of its priesthood, to the high development of its laws concerning property, and the care with which they were enforced; and, in fact, point to an exceedingly high state of social organisation, under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, such as in some points was, perhaps, hardly realized by any other nation of antiquity, not excepting the Romans. All this illustrates what is said by the prophets about Babylon, which, according to them, was only ruined by its false system of religion. Babylon was the "glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." The allusions of the prophets to its wealth and prosperity, and the greatness of its buildings, have already been quoted. But all this only served to increase the astonishment and awe felt by men when the news at last arrived that Babylon was fallen.

* See Chapter XI.

CHAPTER XVII.

ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN RELIGION.*

THE Babylonians, as well as the Assyrians, who held the same religious beliefs as the former, believed that the earth had the form of a vast mountain rising out of the ocean, or "deep," which entirely surrounded it. The earth was not, however, according to the Chaldæan philosophers, a solid body, but was hollow; and under the vast subterranean vault lay the region of the dead, which they named *Aralu*. The earth was divided into seven concentric zones; and, corresponding to these, there were seven circles of Hades, divided from one another by walls and gates. Besides this division of the earth into zones, it was also marked off into four equal quarters, which were denominated the "Four Regions"; and over these the Assyrian and Babylonian princes, in their pride, often claimed the right of dominion; for it will be remembered that "King of the Four Regions" is one of their most frequently recurring titles.

Above the earth was set the firmament of heaven,

* For all that is known of Assyrian and Babylonian religion and cosmology, see Professor Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures," and Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier*.

the vault of which enclosed the earth and the terrestrial ocean, which surrounded it. Above this vault was the heavenly ocean, the waters of which were prevented from deluging the earth by the interposition of the firmament, upon which they rested. Over this heavenly ocean there was the innermost heaven: the dwelling of the gods. Beneath the vault of the firmament of heaven, and immediately above the earth, the stars were fixed, and the sun and moon and five planets moved in paths appointed for them. The fixed stars formed a mysterious "writing" on the heavenly vault; and this "writing" was studied by the astrologers, who read the destinies of men therein; the constellations were a kind of heavenly hieroglyphics. On the east and on the west were doors in heaven, from which the sun issued in the morning and into which he entered in the evening; hence the sunrise and sunset were named the "coming forth" and "entering in" of the sun.

The sun and moon and planets were worshipped by the Babylonians as gods. Of Shamash, the "Sun-god," and Sin, the "Moon-god," frequent mention has already been made. Of the rest of the planets—for the sun and moon were also included under this category—Jupiter was identified with Merodach, Venus with Ishtar or Ashtoreth, Mars with Nergal, Mercury with Nebo, and Saturn with Ninib. These were the names which the planets bore when looked upon as divinities. When considered astrologically or astronomically, they had other names, chiefly of Accadian origin; and it is an interesting confirmation of modern researches that

the Greek lexicographer, Hesychius, has preserved the names given to the planets by the Babylonians, in forms closely agreeing with those resulting from the decipherments of the cuneiform characters.

The first creation of the universe does not appear to have been recorded in the sacred literature of Babylonia. We are told by Greek writers that the Chaldæan philosophers believed in the eternity of matter, and this statement is borne out by the cuneiform inscriptions. The latter represent the world as originally in a state of chaos, and covered by the waters of the deep; there were no living beings, and none of the gods had come into existence. The abyss was the father, and the ocean of chaos was the mother of all things. The first offspring of the ocean and the abyss was the great god Lakhmu, with his brother Lakhamu, who were conceived as a sort of primeval monsters: the evil brood of chaos. Ages afterwards, the gods *An-sar* and *Ki-sar* were also born of the abyss and the chaotic ocean; these beings represent the first division of heaven and earth, as their names imply. Of these two principles, after long ages, the three great gods Anu, Bel, and Ea were born; and Bel was the creator of that order of things which we now see. According to other accounts, Ea was the creator, and is spoken of as "the potter," because he formed man out of clay. But in the accounts preserved by Berosus and Damascius, and in the legend of Bel-Merodach and the dragon of chaos, of which we have the original version in cuneiform characters, as well as according to the new account of

the creation discovered by Mr. Pinches and quoted above,* it is Bel-Merodach, the great god of Babylon, who performs the functions of creator. The fight between Bel-Merodach and the ocean of chaos, personified as a terrible monster, with claws and the head of a savage beast, symbolizes the struggle of light and darkness. When Merodach had overcome the mother of chaos and her brood, he divided her into two, and formed the creatures of heaven and earth out of the two halves.

The tutelary god of Babylon, Bel-Merodach, is several times named by the Hebrew prophets. Jeremiah speaks of him as a personification of the city which he was believed to protect and govern, and which was his proper home and residence :—

“I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up; and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him.”

According to the same figure, which typifies the city under the name of its presiding deity, Jeremiah speaks of the fall of Babylon as the destruction of Merodach :—

“Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not; say: Babylon is taken; Bel is confounded; Merodach is broken in pieces.”

It was a sign of the pre-eminence of this god in Babylonia that a very large proportion of the Babylonian names are compounded of the name of Bel or Merodach, together with other elements. Among those most

* See Chapter xiii., p. 325.

familiar to us may be mentioned: Merodach-baladan, which is a corrupt form of *Marduk-ablu-iddin*, signifying, "Merodach has given a son"; Belshazzar, which means "Bel defends the king"; * Evil-Merodach, or "the Man of Merodach." Besides these names, so well known to us from the Hebrew Scriptures, the legal and commercial documents of Babylonia supply us with a host of names formed in a similar manner, among the commonest of which are: *Bel-akhe-iddin*, or "Bel gives brothers"; *Bel-epush*, or "Bel creates"; *Bel-uballit*, or "Bel gives life"; *Bel-ukin*, or "Bel establishes"; *Bel-shum-ishkun*, or "Bel sets the name"; and, on the other hand, *Marduk-iddin*, or "Merodach gives"; *Marduk-etir*, or "Merodach preserves"; *Marduk-irba*, or "Merodach multiplies"; *Marduk-zir-ibni*, or "Merodach creates offspring."

In the last chapter of the Book of Daniel, according to the version of the Septuagint, the god Bel, his image, his temple, and his worship are spoken of. It is quite in accordance with the Babylonian records that Cyrus is, in this chapter, represented as a devout worshipper of Bel-Merodach,† through whose favour he was supposed to have taken possession of Babylonia.

As it has been frequently observed, the principal temple of Babylon was that called Bit-Saggil, dedicated to Bel-Merodach. The magnificence of this temple is described by Herodotus and Ctesias. The images and furniture which it contained were overlaid with gold and silver. A cuneiform inscription on a clay tablet gives an

* See page 304.

† See above, pp. 14 and 305.

account of a temple which is apparently to be identified with Bit-Saggil, and George Smith published a summary of the contents of this document in 1875. According to this account, the length of the grand court-yard of the temple is estimated at 1,156 English feet, and its breadth at 900 feet. Around the court-yard were six gates, each of which had its own name: there was the grand gate, the gate of the rising sun, the great gate, the gate of the colossi, the gate of the canal, and the gate of the tower. In the centre was a platform upon which rose the great tower in stages, which formed the principal feature of the temple. The tower had seven storeys, gradually diminishing in length and breadth from the bottom to the top. The lower stage was 300 feet square and 110 feet high; the second was 260 feet square and 60 feet high; the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth were each 20 feet high, and respectively 200, 170, 140, and 110 feet square; the seventh and topmost storey was 80 feet long, 70 feet broad, and 50 feet high. Thus the whole tower was 300 feet in height; but as it stood upon a platform, the height of the summit above the plain was more than the figure here stated. The topmost storey was used by the priestly astronomers for their observations. An inclined passage wound round the outside and led to the summit.*

Around the base of this lofty tower were a number of small temples or chapels, dedicated to Bel-Merodach himself and to other gods; for, besides being the sanctuary of the great presiding god of Babylon, Bit-

* See page 271.

Saggil was a pantheon in which all the gods of the empire had shrines. The lesser gods, although in their own cities they might be supreme, came to Babylon only to pay their respects to Bel-Merodach. On the festival of the new year the great god solemnly took his seat in his temple, and the gods of heaven and earth reverently bowed before their king.

Many of the rulers of Babylonia—both the Assyrian and the native sovereigns—have left us records of the gifts that they offered to the temple of Bit-Saggil, and its companion temple, Bit-Zida, in Borsippa. The “Maintainer of Bit-Saggil and Bit-Zida” was the common title of these princes from early times, and is to be read on all the thousands of bricks that have been extracted from the ruins of Babylon for the construction of modern towns or villages. Most of these bricks are of the time of Nebuchadnezzar; and this, in fact, was the prince who, so far as the records tell us, did most to beautify these great temples. Nebuchadnezzar tells us in his inscriptions that he repaired the outer walls of Bit-Saggil, and overlaid some of the walls with gold:—

“His chamber, the royal chamber, the lordly chamber, consecrated to the leader of the gods, to the prince Merodach, which a former king had covered with silver, I overlaid with bright gold.”

In illustration of the adornment of temple walls with gold, it should be mentioned that thin plates of gold, with the gilded nails which had formerly fastened them in their place, were found among the remains of the staged tower at Abu Shahrein, the ancient Eridu; they were buried among the rubbish at the summit of

the tower, and must have served to gild the roof or cupola which formed its crown.

Nebuchadnezzar provided no less lavishly for the services of the temple. He gave golden vessels for the use of the sanctuary. Many of the treasures which he had carried off as spoil, during his campaigns between "the upper sea and the lower sea," were dedicated to Merodach. He says himself :—

"He, the revered prince, the leader of the gods, the prince Merodach, heard my supplication and received my prayer; he laid the fear of his godhead in my heart; I feared his glory. In his high service I passed through distant lands, remote mountain ranges, from the upper to the lower sea—precipitous roads, closed paths, where my march was impeded, where there was no foothold, impassable ways—ways through thirsty deserts. I subdued rebels, I took my adversaries captive, I ruled the land, I made the inhabitants prosperous, and carried away the wicked and the rebellious into distant regions; I brought silver and gold, precious stones, copper, precious woods, cedar, precious stores of all kinds, the products of the mountains, the products of the sea, rich gifts, splendid offerings; and I laid them before Merodach in Babylon."

The Babylonian temples must actually have "shone like the sun," as Nebuchadnezzar himself says. Perhaps it was the splendour of the gilded domes and walls that made the prophet speak of Babylon as "the golden city." *

An epithet frequently given to Bel-Merodach is the "merciful one," and he was said to restore the dead to life.

A prayer, recited before his image by the priests at the new year's festival, runs as follows :—

* Isaiah xiv. 4.

“O Bel, who in thy strength hast no equal! O Bel, blessed sovereign, lord of the world, seeking after the favour of the great gods; the lord who by thy glance hast destroyed the strong, lord of kings, light of mankind, establisher of faith! O Bel, thy sceptre is Babylon; thy crown is Borsippa, the wide heaven is the dwelling-place of thy liver. . . . O lord of the world, light of the spirits of heaven, utterer of blessings, who is there whose mouth murmurs not of thy righteousness, and speaks not of thy glory, and celebrates not thy dominion? O lord of the world, who dwellest in the temple of the Sun, reject not the hands that are raised to thee; be merciful to thy city of Babylon; incline thy face to thy temple of Bit-Saggil; and grant the prayers of thy people, the sons of Babylon!”*

There seems to have been a certain inconsistency among the religious beliefs of the Babylonians; and, although there was a separate Sun-god, whose principal temple was at Sippara, yet Bel-Merodach himself seems to have been often identified with the sun, as well as with the planet Jupiter. These are points, however, which require further investigation.

The son of Bel-Merodach was the almost equally powerful divinity Nebo, whose name is coupled with that of his father by the Hebrew prophet,† when he predicts the destruction of the idols of Babylon at the fall of that city:—

“Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth. . . . They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.”

Nebo was the special patron of the literary class in Babylonia, and consequently in Assyria, whither the religious traditions of Babylonia flowed. His principal sanctuary was the second great temple of Babylonia,

* Professor Sayce's translation.

† Isaiah xli. 1.

Bit-Zida at Borsippa, called by the Jews the "Tower of Babylon." This temple seems to have been no less magnificent than its fellow, *Bit-Saggil*, and was, equally with the latter, the object of the generous devotion of the kings. Nebuchadnezzar completed its summit, and adorned it with cedar, bronze, silver, and gold. The king thus prays Nebo to reward him for his gifts:—

"O Nebo, true son, sublime messenger, majestic, beloved of Merodach, look favourably upon my pious works; grant me long life and enjoyment of life; let my throne be firm, my reign long; let my enemies be overthrown, let me subdue the lands of the enemy. Decree length of days, and write down life for me upon thy faithful tablet, which determines the circle of heaven and earth. Make my deeds pleasing in the sight of Merodach, the king of heaven and earth, thy father and progenitor, and speak in my favour. Let the words 'Nebuchadnezzar is a king who adorns the temples' be in thy mouth!"

A monument of Nebuchadnezzar's restoration of *Bit-Zida* is now in the British Museum, in the form of a bronze threshold brought from the ruins of Birs-Nimroud, which are the remains of the great temple. Upon this bronze threshold are the following words:—

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, maintainer of the temples of *Bit-Saggil* and *Bit-Zida*, princely son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, have restored for Nebo, the high lord, who makes the days of my life long, his temple, *Bit-Zida*, in Borsippa."

Nebo was the scribe and counsellor of the gods, and in this capacity he became the guardian of writing and literature. He communicated his deep wisdom to the priests of Babylonia. He seems to have interceded with Bel-Merodach in favour of his worshippers. His

very name means the “speaker” or “prophet,” and comes from the same root as the name which the Hebrews applied to their prophets when the latter were no longer called “seers.” *

In the British Museum are two large stone statues of Nebo, brought from his temple at Calah. They were set up in the reign of Ramman-nirar III. (B.C. 812–783) by the governor of Calah, who caused the following inscription to be engraved upon them:—

“To the god Nebo, the high ruler, the son of Bit-Saggil; the clear-sighted, the well-placed, the princely, the sublime son of Nukimmut, whose commands are received; the patron of arts (?), to whom all things in heaven and earth are entrusted; the all-knowing, whose name is the ‘attentive one’; the holder of the writing-reed, . . . the merciful, the majestic, who possesses wisdom; . . . the beloved of Bel, the lord of lords; whose power is unequalled; without whom no counsel is taken in heaven; the compassionate, the gracious; whose rule is good, who dwells in Bit-Zida within Calah; the great lord, his ruler; has Biltarsi-iluma, governor of Calah and other cities, caused this image to be made and consecrated, for the life of Ramman-nirar, king of Assyria, his lord, and for the life of Sammuramat, the wife of the palace, his lady, and for his own life, that he may see long days and . . . years, may have peace for himself and his family, and may be spared from sickness.

“O future generations, trust in Nebo, and trust in no other god!”

From this inscription it seems that Nebo possessed a temple at Calah of the same name as his principal sanctuary at Borsippa. In a similar manner there was, in the temple of Bit-Saggil, a chapel, dedicated to Nebo, and also called Bit-Zida.

* 1 Samuel ix. 9.

Exactly as the Babylonians formed many proper names with the name of their chief god Bel, or Merodach, so they formed others with the name of Nebo. The name of the great conqueror Nebuchadnezzar, or, in the more correct form used by Jeremiah, Nebuchadrezzar, is a reproduction in Hebrew of the Babylonian name *Nabú-kudur-usur*, or "Nebo defends the crown." The father of Nebuchadnezzar was *Nabú-apal-usur*: a name altered by the Greeks into *Nabopolassaros*, and signifying "Nebo defends the son." The last king of Babylon was named *Nabú-naid*, or, by the Greeks, Nabonidos, Nabonnedos, Labunetos; and this name means "Nebo exalts." The first king of Babylon who appears in the Canon of Ptolemy is Nabonassar, or, more correctly, *Nabú-násir*, that is to say, "Nebo is the defender." The captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, who was left in charge of Jerusalem and carried the Jewish people into captivity, was Nebuzaradan, more correctly, *Nabú-zir-iddin*, or, "Nebo gives offspring." The Rab-saris, or chief of Nebuchadnezzar's eunuchs, was Nebushasban, or, in the native form, *Nabú-Shezibanni*: "Nebo, save me!"

Mention has been made above of the Babylonian Pluto, who was called Nergal.* He was especially the local deity of Cuth, or Cutha, and appears as such in the passage of the Second Book of Kings where it is stated that the Babylonian captives, deported from their native city of Cutha, in order to people the desolate country of Samaria, introduced the worship of Nergal

* See page 285.

into the latter region, and set up his images there. From very early days Nergal had been worshipped in the old city of Cutha, which was probably founded by the Accadians, but was soon captured or colonised by their Semitic neighbours. The inscription of Dungi, king of Ur, quoted above,* shows that in his time this divinity was already the tutelary god of Cuth; and later Babylonian inscriptions refer to the same city as the earthly home of the king of Hades.

Many proper names were compounded with the name of Nergal in Babylonia. First comes that of Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, the King Neriglissar, or *Nergal-shar-usur*, which was also the name of the great officer called the Rab-mag,† who took part in the siege of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, and, when the city was taken, came in and sat in the middle gate, with the other princes and officers. Then there are many names which occur in the commercial and legal documents, such as *Nergal-akh-iddin*, or "Nergal gives a brother"; *Nergal-uballit*, or "Nergal gives life"; *Nergal-shuzibanni*, or "Nergal, save me!"

Some others of the Babylonian gods are mentioned in the Bible, through their being worshipped in Syria and Phœnicia, as well as in Mesopotamia. The great Syrian god Rimmon, in whose house Naaman begged that he might still be allowed to bow down, was worshipped also by the Babylonians and Assyrians. Besides the name of Rimmon, he had another: that of Hadad; and the prophet Zechariah, uniting the two

* See page 150.

† Jeremiah xxxix. 3 and 13.

names, speaks of "the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." A Babylonian document expressly informs us that Addu—that is to say, Hadad—was a name given in Syria to the god Rimmon; and the name of Rip-Adda of Byblus, now familiar to us from the Tell el-Amarna tablets, is often written with the same cuneiform ideogram which expresses the name of Rimmon, or Ramman, in the texts of Babylonia and Assyria, although it is sometimes written phonetically as *Ri-ip-Ad-da*. In Syria, Rimmon or Hadad was recognised as a personification of the sun; in Babylonia and Assyria he is more especially the god of the atmosphere, and rules the weather. Perhaps he owed his importance in that region, which suffers so terribly from the action of the floods, to the belief that the latter were under his control. He is sometimes invoked in maledictory passages that he may employ his power to cause damage to some enemy. An instance of this is seen in the curses * poured forth upon those who might in future days disturb or destroy the records of the royal architects of Assyria and Babylonia, which are placed upon the walls of their buildings or buried in cavities among the foundations. Rimmon is implored to drown the lands of the guilty with his floods, or to strike the sinners with his thunderbolts. The thunder was the voice of Rimmon.

Various proper names were formed with the name of the god Rimmon; for example, that of Ramman-nirar, which belonged to three kings of Assyria known to

* See page 142.

us. Other instances are *Ramman-násir*, or “Rimmon defends”; *Ramman-shum-iddin*, or “Rimmon gives the name”; and similar compounds.

Dagon appears in the Bible especially as the god of the Philistines; but he was also worshipped in Assyria and Babylonia, although his name does not appear so frequently in the texts as those of the gods already mentioned.

Tammuz was a Syrian divinity, whose death was mourned by the women at midsummer. Ezekiel, in a vision, saw the Israelitish women weeping for Tammuz at the gate of the house of Jehovah, and was provoked to anger at the sight of this and other idolatrous abominations. It is well known that Tammuz was called Adonis by the Greeks, from the Semitic word signifying “my lord,” by which title he was addressed in the religious ceremonies of his festival. It is also generally recognised at present that Tammuz, or Adonis, was a personification of the fresh vegetation of spring, slain by the fierce rays of the sun at midsummer, as Adonis was slain by the tusk of the boar. In Babylonian the name appears as *Dûzu*, the husband of Ishtar, whom she went to seek in the infernal regions after his death. The identity of the names is further proved by the fact that the Babylonian month, “*Dûzu*,” appears in the list of the Hebrew months as Tammuz. An allusion to the midsummer festival of Tammuz appears in the astronomical tablet discovered by Father Strassmaier, of which an account is given above.* Greek writers have given us an

* See page 274.

account of the solemnities which took place at this festival in Syria, and especially in Byblus, the city of Adonis. The women indulged in extravagant lamentations, and the withering of the vernal vegetation by the mid-summer sun was symbolised by the "gardens of Adonis"—pots of earth filled with mould, in which cut flowers and herbs were planted, that quickly faded away and died.

Very much more frequently than the last-mentioned divinities is Ashtoreth, or Ishtar, named in the Assyrian and Babylonian texts. This goddess was identified by the Babylonians with Venus, the evening star—not with the moon, as by the Phœnicians. There were several cities which claimed Ishtar as their tutelary deity; and perhaps, to some extent, these Ishtars were looked upon as different goddesses. In early inscriptions of Babylonia we find the name of Ishtar of Erech, and also of Ishtar of Hallab, who was worshipped by Kudurmapuk and Rim-aku, the Elamite princes, and by Khammuri, the first powerful King of Babylon. In later days we meet with frequent mention of Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela. It will be remembered that the image of Ishtar of Ninâ, or Nineveh, was sent into Egypt in the reign of Amenophis III., as one of the Tell el-Amarna tablets informs us. Another name given to the goddess Ishtar was Nana.

The following prayer, addressed to the goddess Ishtar, occurs in the annals of Sardanapalus, who was about to engage in a war against Te-umman, King of Elam :—

“ O Lady of Arbela ! I am Sardanapalus, King of Assyria, the creation of thy hands. . . . I have visited thy dwelling-place in order to restore the temples of Assyria, and to complete the building of the cities of Accad. . . . Te-umman, King of Elam . . . has set his army in motion and makes himself ready for battle, that he may march against Assyria. O warlike one among the gods . . . scatter him in the midst of the battle ; send against him a storm and an evil wind.”

In consequence of this prayer to Ishtar for her protection, the goddess appeared in a dream to a magician or interpreter of dreams, in the habit of a warrior armed with a bow and a sword, and promised to go before Sardanapalus during his campaign, and to ensure his victory. The announcement of this dream inspired Sardanapalus with the fullest confidence, and he marched against the Elamites with the firm expectation of a victory, which was not slow to follow.

Ishtar was one of the principal divinities of Assyria and Babylonia. She is mentioned on a par with Bel, Nebo, the Sun-god, the Moon-god, Rimmon, Nergal, Ninib, and, in Assyria, with the great national god of that country, Ashur.

The last-named deity was unknown in Babylonia, but in Assyria was the greatest of all the gods, so far as any one of them was greater than the others. He is generally mentioned first, and often spoken of as “ lord of the gods ”—a title, however, which is not applied consistently to any one of the deities. The name Ashur is, of course, identical with the name of the country of Assyria and with that of its earliest capital, Ashur,* the

* See page 142.

modern Kalat-Sherkat. In all the records of the Assyrian kings the latter attribute their exploits to the favour and assistance of Ashur and other gods. When foreign princes refused to pay tribute to the King of Assyria, this was looked upon as a sin against Ashur, the great god, and by his command the king undertook his expeditions into the country of the rebels, and chastised them for their disobedience to his national deity, who, in the bas-reliefs, appears as leading the Assyrian armies to victory, and hovering above them in the air.

Nothing is clearer from the Assyrian and Babylonian records than the identification of the gods with the countries or cities over which they presided. An offence against Assyria is an offence against the god Ashur, and an offence against Babylon is an offence against Bel-Merodach. When a city was captured it was the custom to seize and carry away the images of the local gods, who were held to be vanquished when the place over which they presided was taken. This idea is very clearly expressed in the words of Sennacherib to Hezekiah, whom he reproaches for trusting in a God who would be overcome like the gods of the nations :—

“Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

“Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

“Who are they among all the gods of these lands that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?”

There are many instances in the records of the carrying of the gods of conquered nations into captivity, together with the people whom they had failed to protect. When Sardanapalus sacked Susa, he carried off the images of the native gods and goddesses ; * and thus he took revenge upon the Elamites, who, sixteen hundred years before, had carried off the image of Nana from Babylonia. In the reign of Sennacherib the Assyrians captured and removed the gods of Erech. Esarhaddon carried off the gods of Khazu. Sometimes, instead of being removed, the gods were burnt. The general purpose was, however, to transfer the rule of the country from the conquered to the conquerors by taking the gods to the capital city of the latter, where, it was thought, they became subject, together with their respective countries, to the gods of the ruling race. So the first thought, when a change of fortune was brought about, was to bring back the gods to their own cities, where they might again exercise an independent rule. It was in this way that, when Assyria ceased to maintain her supremacy over Babylonia, as, for instance, on the accession of Shamash-shum-ukin, the gods of Babylon were brought out of Assyria to their own place.

The names of several of the local gods of Assyria and Babylonia have already been mentioned. Bel-Merodach was the local god of Babylon ; Nergal, of Cutha ; Ishtar, of Nineveh, or of Erech, or of Arbela ; the Sun-god was the tutelary deity of Sippara, and the

* See page 247.

Moon-god of Ur; and besides these, each city had, without doubt, its own local divinity.

Besides the principal gods whom we have mentioned, there was an innumerable host of spirits and divinities in the Babylonian pantheon. Many of them may have been of local importance, but we know little or nothing of them. Ashur-nasir-pal, in an inscription, speaks of "65,000 gods of heaven and earth." The largest tablet in the British Museum is one covered with a long list of deities. According to a Semitic belief, each god had a corresponding goddess; so Bel had a wife, *Biltu*, or Beltis.

The idols of Babylonia are much spoken of by the Hebrew prophets, from whom we hear that they were often lavishly adorned or overlaid with gold or silver; that they were dressed in garments of bluish-purple or reddish-purple;* that they were carried in procession; that their number was exceedingly great, and that the people were enthusiastic in their worship.

According to Jeremiah, Babylonia was—

"The land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols."

Isaiah says:—

"They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.

"They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove."

Habakkuk, speaking of the Babylonians, exclaims:—

* See page 394 ff.

“What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it ; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols ?

“Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake ; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach ! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.”

In the “ epistle of Jeremiah ” to the Jews about to be taken as captives to Babylonia, included in the Book of Baruch,* there is an account of the temples and idols of the Babylonians which quite corresponds to all that we know of them from native sources. The writer says that the Jews, when they reach Babylon, will see gods of gold and silver, and others simply of wood or stone, carried about on men’s shoulders in procession, and striking awe into the hearts of their worshippers, who bow down before and behind them. The images are said to have gold crowns on their heads, to wear purple robes, and to hold sceptres or swords in their hands ; their temples are hung with many lamps, the smoke of which made the faces of the idols black ; many animals were offered to them in sacrifice. A large body of priests was devoted to their worship ; and it is remarked that the priests had shaven heads : a custom which may have been borrowed, like so much of Babylonian religion, from the Accadians, whose priests, at least in the time of Gudea, as we know from his statues, had closely-shaven heads.

Few images of the gods have been found in the excavations made during this century in Mesopotamia.

* In the Vulgate. Separate in the LXX.

Naturally, the precious metals were not allowed to remain unplundered when the temples fell into ruin or were sacked; and we are expressly told that the later Persian kings carried off golden images of the Babylonian gods. Only a few small figures of bronze and clay have been disinterred among the ruins; and these are not easily to be identified with any of the gods known to us. There is one notable exception, however, and that is the twin images of Nebo from Calah, now in the British Museum, the inscription upon which has been quoted above. These are two stone figures, larger than life, representing the god in a standing posture, with clasped hands. On his head he wears the tiara with horns on each side, appropriated to figures of supernatural beings, gods, or genii. As works of art, the statues are not to be admired; the execution is stiff and poor. On the skirt of the robe, the folds of which are not indicated, the inscription of the donor is engraved in large characters, and covers half of the surface.

Upon a bas-relief discovered by Sir Henry Layard at Nineveh, but, unfortunately, never brought to Europe, there was a representation of two images of gods, carried in procession upon men's shoulders, according to the words of the Hebrew prophets. The idols wear the horned tiaras, of which we have spoken, surmounted by rosettes; they appear to be dressed in embroidered robes, and carry in their hands, not sceptres or swords, but symbolical rings. The priests who bear them wear pointed caps and short tunics.

The Babylonian historian Berosus speaks of a certain priestess named Sarachero, who was the dresser of the image of Beltis. Under her charge must have been the robes of blue and crimson, embroidered like those in the bas-relief, of which the prophet Jeremiah speaks :—

“The customs of the people are vain : for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

“They deck it with silver and with gold ; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

“They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not : they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them ; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

“Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder : blue and purple is their clothing : they are all the work of cunning men.

“Every man is brutish in his knowledge : every founder is confounded by the graven image : for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.”

Besides having the care of the gorgeous robes worn by the images, the dressers of the gods must have had charge of their tiaras, of the necklaces and bracelets which they wore, and of the emblems which they carried.

Nabû-apal-iddin, who reigned over Babylon from B.C. 883 to B.C. 852, so far as his date can be ascertained, has left us a list of the offerings which he made to the Temple of the Sun at Sippara, already so often mentioned. It includes the flesh of animals, such as

sheep, oxen, and goats, fish, honey, and wine; and it also enumerates certain garments to be worn by the images of the Sun-god and other divinities. These garments were partly of the bluish-purple already spoken of; but beyond that our knowledge of the Assyrian language does not allow us to go. The other terms used in the description of the garments are at present unintelligible to us. The list is beautifully engraved on a stone tablet, enclosed in a clay coffer, and disinterred by Mr. Rassam among the ruins of Sippara. At the head of the inscription is a small but carefully executed bas-relief, representing the Sun-god on his throne, attended by his priests; above the figure of the god is the disk of the sun. The monument is to be seen at the British Museum.

The religious processions, in which the images of the gods were carried through the streets, while the multitude fell down in adoration before them, according to the allusions of the prophets and the scene depicted on the bas-relief, are mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions. It will be remembered that in the annals of Nabonidus * it is particularly stated that during several successive years the solemn processions at the beginning of the year, in the month of Nisan, did not take place, owing to the negligence of the king or to the disapproval of his policy on the part of the priests. As the clay tablet tells us:—

“Nebo did not come to Babylon; Bel did not come forth.”

* See page 309 f.

On this festival it was customary that the image of the god Nebo should be solemnly carried from his temple at Borsippa, to greet his father, Bel-Merodach, in his temple, Bit-Saggil, in Babylon. One of the prayers used at this festival has already been quoted.* The god Bel came out to meet his son. It was at this festival that the oracles of Bel were communicated to the priests, and announced by them to the king and people.

Among the tablets forming the library of Sardanapalus there are a certain number of texts containing the ritual to be observed in the worship of the gods; but these require further study before they can be fully understood, for the unusual words and the use of technical terms present many difficulties. The material for comparison is not large, as it is in the historical inscriptions.

The latter documents, however, make occasional mention of religious rites. From them we learn that the King of Babylon was consecrated and legitimated by a rite which is called "grasping the hands of Bel." Thus we read of Sargon, who, after the flight of Merodach-baladan II., became King of Babylon:—

"In his thirteenth year [as King of Assyria], Sargon grasped the hands of Bel, and subdued Babylonia."

After this rite, the god accepted the king, who thus yielded himself to his guidance, and henceforth the monarch looked upon himself as "led by the hand of Merodach." No fact is more clearly to be learnt from

* See page 422.

the inscriptions than that the Assyrian and Babylonian sovereigns attributed their legitimacy to their acceptance by the gods Ashur or Bel-Merodach. It is they who raise the kings to the thrones of their respective countries, and make them the rightful rulers: without the authority of the gods the kings have no rights. In fact, the doctrine of the "divine right" of kings lay at the root of the whole system of government in Mesopotamia; but it was not accompanied by the more modern doctrine that this divine right was necessarily inherited. The right of government was conferred by the gods upon whomsoever they chose, whether this was the son of the preceding monarch or a man of private station, or even a foreigner, like Cyrus the Persian. The kingly authority depended, in fact, upon the favour of the priests, and he was most assured of establishing his throne who made the richest offerings to the temples and supported most faithfully the recognised worship. According to Professor Sayce, Nabonidus lost his throne because he tried to abolish the local worships, which formed the essence of Babylonian religion, and to centralise the worship of the country in Babylon—a policy through which he only succeeded in offending the other cities of his kingdom and in irritating the priests of Merodach, who saw himself injured in the insults offered to his brother-gods. This point, however, does not seem quite clear; for it might be thought that the priests of Merodach would have reaped great advantages through such a centralisation, and yet it is this deity in particular who was offended by the policy

of Nabonidus, and, rejecting the latter, transferred his protection to the alien, Cyrus.

The sacrifices offered by the Babylonians and Assyrians seem to have resembled those of the other ancient nations of Western Asia. Sheep and cattle were slaughtered as offerings to the gods, and gifts of vegetable products were also made to them. Libations of wine were poured out before them; special sacrifices were offered every month. Nebuchadnezzar says that at the great festivals he offered to Merodach and Nebo, in their temples, bulls without blemish, fish, birds, garlic, honey, wine, milk, and other drinks—all in great abundance. Many of the offerings were, of course, devoted to the maintenance of the priests. To the latter, tithes were regularly paid,* and besides that, they possessed large property in land and in gold, with which the kings had endowed them. The kings themselves were regarded as high priests of the gods, and the latter is one of their proudest titles. There seem to have been several orders of priests, who were known by different designations.

Of other ritual observances we know little. There were rites of purification by water, and it seems that vessels of lustral water, similar to those represented in the bas-relief of the temple of the god Khaldia in Armenia, stood at the entrances of the temples; the sculpture shows two circular vessels, supported on tripods, and in shape resembling the immense "Vase of Amathus," now in the Louvre. Incense was

* See page 294.

burnt in honour of the gods, and pillars with smoking censers at the top are seen in the bas-reliefs. Hymns were sung to the accompaniment of wind-instruments and harps. Prayers were recited by the priests, usually in the Accadian language, according to the general law of religious conservatism, which preserves the ancient language of religious worship even when it ceases to be understood by the vulgar. It has been already remarked that the liturgical formulæ of Babylonia were borrowed from the Accadians, together with much of their religion. Possibly the priests of Babylonia were an hereditary caste of Accadian descent, as certain passages in ancient authors might imply; but this is uncertain. They had, of course, learnt to use the Semitic Babylonian in the ordinary intercourse of life; and they bore Semitic names.

One of the bas-reliefs from the palace of Ashurnasir-pal at Calah exhibits this monarch offering to the gods a bull, which he had slain during one of his hunting expeditions. The king, dressed in his royal robes, and with the peaked tiara of royalty upon his head, holds in one hand his bow, upon which he leans, and in the other a goblet containing the wine of libation. Behind the king stands the chief eunuch, holding over the monarch the royal umbrella, which was an emblem of kingly power in ancient Assyria, from whence it was borrowed by the Persians and, in later times, by Mahometan sovereigns. Behind the eunuch are two of the great officers of the court, and facing the king are three figures, one with the fly-flap,

while the others stand with clasped hands, and are probably the chief priests. Behind the latter are two musicians with harps, or, rather, lyres, which they strike with the plectrum, while the priests sing their hymns to the gods.

Another bas-relief, which proceeds from the palace of Sardanapalus at Nineveh, represents a similar scene : the offering up of lions slain by the monarch during one of the lion-hunts which the sculptures of his reign so vividly reproduce for us. The ritual followed is similar to that in the sacrifice of Ashur-nasir-pal.

An inscription of Sardanapalus also speaks of certain offerings which he made in memory of his ancestors.

Some of the mystical purifications and other religious or magical rites of the Chaldæans were handed down to comparatively late times, and were borrowed by some of the Greek philosophical sects.

Of the internal arrangement of the temples we know little. At the extremity appears to have been the shrine of the god, concealed by a veil. Before this were altars and tables, on which the offerings were laid. Many lamps were kept burning in the temples, which admitted no daylight except through the door.

It should not be forgotten that besides the gods, the Assyrian and Babylonian mythology included an immense number of spirits who inhabited heaven and earth ; some were good, and some were evil. To the latter diseases and misfortunes of all sorts were attributed, and the sorcerers and enchanters muttered their incantations for the purpose of driving them away.

One of the oldest legends of Babylonia narrates the attack of seven evil spirits upon the moon. Some of the sculptures seem to represent the popular idea of such malignant demons, in the figures of monsters, with human bodies and the heads of wild beasts, or other monstrous forms which we see in the bas-reliefs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN LANGUAGE.

SINCE the language of the Assyrians and Babylonians was a Semitic language, closely allied to the Hebrew, the monuments of it that have been discovered during this century are of great value for comparison with the language of the Old Testament; and as the study of the cuneiform inscriptions progresses, it may be expected that the two branches of the Semitic family of speech will throw more and more light upon one another. It is usual to speak of Assyrian and Babylonian as a single branch of language, because, so far as it can be judged, they were, though undoubtedly distinct dialects, yet so nearly identical that for ordinary purposes they may be accepted as one. As it has already been remarked, however, the cuneiform system of writing is often far from giving an exact reproduction of the sounds of the languages which it expresses, and therefore, probably, many shades of difference in the pronunciation of vowels and consonants escape us, which would form further proofs of dialectical differences if we were aware of them.

No other language of the Semitic family can show written monuments contemporary with the books of

the Hebrew Canon, with the exception of Phœnician,* which is illustrated by a few inscriptions, some of which are as early as the ninth century before Christ, but which offer only scanty material for comparison with the sister language. The Phœnician inscriptions are all exceedingly brief, with the exception of that upon the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar, King of Sidon, and that upon the monument dedicated to the goddess Beltis of Byblus,† which has been quoted above; and these two inscriptions are of comparatively late date, for Eshmunazar lived in the fourth century before Christ, and Jehavmelech certainly not earlier than the latter part of the sixth. The Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions, then, form the only philological material of any extent, composed in a kindred language, contemporary with the Biblical records of the Old Testament; and it may be said that there are inscriptions from Assyria or Babylonia contemporary with every period of the Old Testament literature, while the whole mass of inscriptions already discovered is of very considerable bulk. That portion of the library of Sardanapalus, for instance, which has already been rescued from the ruins of his palace, consists of considerably more than twelve thousand clay tablets, inscribed with compositions of various dates. Most of these tablets, it must be confessed, are no more than fragments; but these fragments are gradually being joined together—a work of extreme labour, and requiring much patience—so that in time the tablets

* The Moabite stone is, of course, an important exception.

† See page 216 f.

will all be restored to their original state of completeness. Then, besides this library, there are many historical cylinders which were buried at the corners of the platforms on which the palaces and temples were erected, and which are covered with hundreds of lines of writing in minute characters. Babylonia, too, has yielded the immense collection of legal and commercial documents, now at the British Museum, which were disinterred among the ruins of Babylon, or—in far greater quantities—at Sippara, the seat of the Sun-god. A considerable number of astronomical texts has also been found at Sippara—a portion of the scientific archives of the priestly astrologers and astronomers of that centre of learning. From Babylonia also come the oldest inscriptions in the cuneiform character, many of which must be ascribed to periods considerably anterior to the beginning of the second millennium before Christ, and which, altogether, form a large mass of material. The directly historical material found in Babylonia is large, though not so large as that discovered in Assyria, and it is of the greatest scientific importance.

Among the other branches of the Semitic family of languages—which are all employed for the elucidation of their elder sister, the Hebrew—there is none that can boast of monuments to be compared in point of antiquity with the Assyrian and Babylonian. The most cultivated of the Semitic languages, and that which possesses the largest literature, is the Arabic; but no monuments of the Arabic language belong to a time

older than the seventh century after Christ, when the rise of Islam roused the Arab tribes to a new life, and when Arabic literature began with the Koran. Certain songs and poems, which were composed before the age of Mahomet, were probably not committed to writing before his time; and, in fact, the art of writing was not introduced into Arabia long before the birth of the prophet.

The ancient Himyaritic inscriptions of Southern Arabia supply a very scanty material for philologists.

The Aramaic language is divided into two branches—the Chaldee and the Syriac. To the former branch the Targums and the Talmud belong—monuments ranging between the third century B.C. and the sixth A.D.

The Syriac literature is entirely ecclesiastical in character. It came into existence after the conversion of Syria to Christianity. The literary monuments of Syriac are fairly numerous, but most of them belong to a period of literary activity beginning with the fifth century after Christ. The translation of the Bible is, of course, an important exception, for it is attributed to the second century.

Palmyra has yielded a few inscriptions of the time of her prosperity, in the third century after Christ. There are some Aramaic monuments of the period before Christ, consisting of the short inscriptions on gems and on clay tablets, where they accompany the cuneiform text, and the Aramaic texts in Egyptian papyri. The Aramaic versions accompanying cuneiform inscrip-

tions, although scanty, are of great interest on account of the confirmation which, so far as they go, they afford of the interpretation of the Assyrian characters by modern scholars. The following inscription, attributed to the seventh century before Christ, will serve as an instance of the longer and more important of such bi-lingual texts; it is rare to find one of such length. The Assyrian text runs thus :—

“ Five homers of barley (!), the property of the king's son, are lent to Khamatutu, of the city of Khanduate. Thirty-four *ka* shall be paid as interest per homer.

“ Month of Tishri ; year of the eponymy * of Nabû-shar-usur.

“ Five reapers.”

The Aramaic version, or docket, written in characters resembling the ancient Phœnician letters, is thus translated :—

“ This is the interest of the prince from Khamatut of Khaduah : five homers at thirty-four *ka* each. Five reapers.

“ In the year of the eponymy of Barnadî Nabû-shar-usur.”

The other important branch of the Semitic family of languages is the Ethiopic, formerly spoken in the country now called Abyssinia and the neighbouring regions. It is closely allied to Arabic, and, in fact, its original home was in Southern Arabia. The Ethiopic literature is, like the Syriac, entirely ecclesiastical, and belongs to a period of religious culture which followed the conversion of Ethiopia to Christianity in the fourth century after Christ. The modern dialects of Abyssinia are much

* See page 146.

mixed with words borrowed from neighbouring African tribes.

There are other branches of the Semitic family even more modern than the Syriac, Ethiopic, and classical Arabic. In modern Babylonia there is the interesting Mandaitic dialect, and in Northern Mesopotamia there is the Neo-Syriac. The modern dialects of Arabic, also, are interesting illustrations of the phenomena of language and the changes which it undergoes.

Of all the kindred tongues, then, the Assyro-Babylonian is that which, when it is fully understood, will be compared with the Hebrew with the greatest fruit. The two languages are contemporary; they grew up side by side; and the monuments which we possess of them belong to a period when the two nations which spoke these languages were constantly in communication with one another—when the intercourse between the Hebrews and the people of Mesopotamia was almost uninterrupted. A large proportion of the Hebrew literature, indeed, belongs to a time when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were either directly subject to the Assyrian monarch, or were, at least, tributary to him.

In spite of this close connection, however, it cannot be denied that, so far as our knowledge of the language allows us to judge, the literature of Mesopotamia contains nothing to be compared, in point of style or imagination, with the writings of the Hebrews. Even the chronicles of the latter are infinitely superior to the dry annals of the Assyrians, with their perpetually-recurring formulæ and their purely official statements of

acts. In the series of legends connected with the name of Gilgamesh (Gisdubar) there is probably greater merit in the literary execution ; and the Descent of Ishtar into Hades is even to be placed upon a higher level than these. But it is premature to discuss the literary merit of the Assyrian compositions until our knowledge of the language is more completely established.

To point out the words and grammatical forms identical or analogous in the two languages would, of course, be foreign to the purpose of a popular work. A few indications, however, of the manner in which the two branches of the Semitic family of languages which were spoken respectively on the shores of the Mediterranean and in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates throw light upon one another may be of some interest. The Assyrian word signifying "God," for example, is identical with the word *El*, of the same meaning, which is familiar to all from the compound Beth-el, or "the House of God," and many similar compounds. It has already been remarked * that "the deep" in the account of the creation of the world is mentioned also in the Assyrian account of the creation, where, by her union with the abyss, she produced the first gods as her offspring, from whom all things in heaven and earth subsequently sprang. It was the same "deep," or "sea," who fought with Merodach, according to the myth of the struggle between the darkness of chaos and the light of the creating sun.

The names of the Euphrates and Tigris are identical

* See page 328.

in Assyrian and Hebrew, although, as in all other cases, the forms of the words are somewhat different. When words are said to be identical in two different languages, it is, of course, meant that the root of the word can be distinctly recognised as identical; each dialect has its own forms, and its own modifications of the original root. The name of the Tigris in some of the Assyrian texts appears as *Idiglat*, or *Idiklat*; and the first syllable here is of interest because it belongs to an old form of the word corresponding to the Hebrew *Hiddekel*, but lost in the Aramaic and Arabic forms, as in the commoner Assyrian form, *Diglat*. The initial H of the Hebrew word is not expressed in the cuneiform writing, which, as we have already seen, is deficient in the expression of aspirates and gutturals. In the Persian form of this name (viz., *Tigrá*), not only was the first syllable dropped, but the *l* was turned to *r*, according to a common interchange of consonants; and hence the Greeks, followed by the Romans, borrowed their name of the river which has come down to us: namely, "Tigris." The syllable *at* at the end of the Assyrian word is simply the feminine termination, while the Hebrews made the word masculine. The other Semitic languages follow the Assyrian in making the name of the great river of Assyria feminine. The Euphrates was called by the early Accadian inhabitants of Babylonia the "river of Sippara"; and the characters with which the Accadians wrote the word were preserved by the Assyrians and Babylonians as the commonest mode of writing it down to the latest times. This peculiarity

in writing is an instance of the compound ideograms mentioned in Chapter IV.,* which formed so great a difficulty to the first decipherers of the cuneiform inscriptions. The characters used to express the name of the Euphrates, if read phonetically, would be pronounced *ut. kip. nun. ki.*; but the syllabaries † show that these characters, when preceded by the character that stands as the ideogram for “river,” are to be pronounced *Purattum*. This last name—allowing for the presence of the termination, which is dropped in Hebrew, although preserved in classical Arabic—is obviously identical with the Hebrew name of the Euphrates, *P'rátth*—the Arabic *Furátun* (*Phurátun*). In some of the historical texts, on the other hand, the name is written phonetically, as *Pu-rat-tum*. The use of ideograms in the Assyrian system of writing is to be accounted for, as it has already been said, by the supposition, now generally accepted as an ascertained fact, that this system of writing was borrowed from the early “Accadian” inhabitants of Babylonia, who spoke a language entirely different from the Semitic family of languages. Most of the Accadian words were expressed in writing by a single character, exactly as words are expressed in the Chinese system of writing. Compound words, on the other hand, were expressed by a group of two or more characters. Now, when the Semitic Babylonians borrowed the Accadian system of writing, they made use of the Accadian characters in two different ways. Sometimes they preserved the sound of the character, but not the

* See page 121.

† See page 127.

sense, and used it to express, not a word, but simply one of the syllables of their own words; and thus they introduced the principle of phonetic writing with syllabic characters. Sometimes, on the other hand, the Babylonian scribes kept the Accadian characters or groups of characters with their original sense; and in this case they gave a new sound to the characters, and read them as Semitic Babylonian words. This is the origin, according to the generally-received hypothesis, of the ideograms, both simple and compound, which occur in the Assyrian and Babylonian texts, where they are mixed up with words written phonetically. The same phenomena are to be found in the Japanese system of writing, which was borrowed from the Chinese, who speak a language different from that of the former nation. The Japanese sometimes use the Chinese characters as expressing sounds, and write with them the words of their own language on the phonetic principle; and sometimes they keep the sense of the Chinese characters and alter the sound, reading them as words of their own language. On this principle, it will be understood how the Semitic Babylonians and Assyrians sometimes wrote the name of the Euphrates with the characters *ut. kip. nun. ki.*, which they nevertheless pronounced *Purattum*, and how they often wrote "Nebuchadnezzar" as *An. pa. sa. du. sis.*,* and read these characters as *Nabû-kudur-usur*, or "Nebo defends the crown." In this last example of ideographic writing the first character means "god" in Accadian, the second "Nebo," the third and fourth to-

* See page 121.

gether form a compound ideogram meaning "crown," and the last character signifies "defends." A curious instance of a compound ideogram is the group of characters which the Assyrians and Babylonians employed to express the idea of a horse, which they hardly ever represented in the phonetic mode of writing. They used, instead of the latter, three characters which signify "the animal of the land of the sunrise": that is to say, the animal which was originally imported into Babylonia from the East. The second and third characters would ordinarily be pronounced *mat. ra.*; the first is never used to express a sound, but only as the ideogram for "animal"; yet the group of three characters was read by the Assyrians and Babylonians simply as *sisu*—a word identical with the Hebrew *sûs*.

The name of Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, does not seem to find any satisfactory explanation in Hebrew; but in Assyrian and Babylonian the word *ablu* or *aplu* means "son," and it may possibly have been pronounced with an initial aspirate in Babylonian, as in the Hebrew proper name.

It is related, in the Hebrew account of the Deluge, that Noah pitched the ark within and without. The word used in the Hebrew text is identical with that employed also in the Babylonian story of the Flood, quoted above. The "pitch" is the bitumen which is so abundant in Babylonia, where there are bituminous springs of water on which this substance floats, and from which it is collected by the natives. The most famous springs of bitumen are on the Euphrates, 180

miles above Babylon, at Hit—a place mentioned by Herodotus, under the name of *Is*, as the principal source from whence this substance was obtained in his time. Strabo says that there are many bituminous springs in Babylonia, but does not mention the name of any particular place. In the bituminous springs of Hit the fluid bubbles up like discoloured water; the bitumen then forms on the surface in lumps, which are collected in large ladles constructed of palm-branches. After cooling, the bitumen is divided into square masses, and transported down the Euphrates to Hillah. Even at the present day it is largely used for caulking boats, and for coating cisterns, baths, and other places which remain in contact with water. So conservative are the people of Mesopotamia that they still employ on the rivers those round boats of osier, coated with bitumen, which we are so familiar with in England through the bas-reliefs from the ancient palaces of Sennacherib and Sardanapalus, in which they are represented; at the present day they are called *kuffehs*. Two rowers occupy the boat, and one pulls towards, while the other pulls from him. This is the mode of rowing which we see in the sculptures; and Herodotus gives an exact description of these same round boats and of the mode of propelling them. The swift currents of the Mesopotamian rivers and their numerous shallows make it difficult or impossible to navigate them with ordinary boats; only boats drawing very little water can be employed. Hence, besides these circular *kuffehs* now mentioned, the commonest craft was a kind of raft, supported by the inflated

skins of goats. These rafts are called *kelek* in modern Arabic. They are described by all the modern travellers who have visited Mesopotamia, where they are still of the same construction as that which we see in the ancient sculptures. The rafts are carried down the stream by the current, and the only oars used are two long poles, with a kind of blade at one end consisting of pieces of cane fastened together; and these oars are used rather as rudders than for the purpose of propelling the raft. Inflated skins are also used by individuals now, as in the days of Sennacherib, to buoy them up while they swim across the river.

In ancient Babylonia and Assyria the bitumen of which we have been speaking was the principal sort of cement employed in the construction of buildings. The kings often tell us that they erected a temple or a palace of "burnt brick and bitumen," the latter word being the same as that used in Genesis in the account of the building of the ark, and translated "pitch" in the Authorised Version. In the Hebrew account of the Tower of Babel it is stated that the builders used "slime" or bitumen for mortar, although the Hebrew text here gives a different, but synonymous, term.

Bitumen, however, though probably cheaper because it was provided ready to hand by Nature, was not so strong a cement as the plaster which the Babylonians manufactured of the gypsum which is so common in their country. This lime-mortar is so strong that at the present day the bricks cemented together by its means are so firmly fixed, in spite of the lapse of ages,

that they can only be removed with the greatest difficulty, whereas those laid in a bed of bitumen can be removed with the greatest ease. In our museums, Babylonian bricks may be seen with the bituminous cement still adhering to them, to remind us of the materials of which the Tower of Babel was constructed.

Although the Hebrew writer does not, in his account of the Tower of Babel, use the common Babylonian word for bitumen which occurs in the account of the construction of the ark by Noah, yet, on the other hand, he uses there a word for "brick" which is very familiar to us from the cuneiform inscriptions. The art of building with brick was probably invented in Babylonia, as the narrative of the Tower of Babel would lead us to suppose. The geological conditions of that country forced this mode of building upon its inhabitants. Babylonia is a great alluvial plain, formed by the deposit during many ages of the soil brought down by the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The rate at which the land at the mouth of the Shatt el-Arab, or confluence of the two streams, is formed at the present day is said to be sixty-six feet a year, and this is the result of the soil brought down by the rivers and deposited upon their banks. The alluvial plain, thus brought into being, consists of the finest clay, well-adapted for making bricks. On the other hand, there is a remarkable absence of the other materials which the different nations of the world have employed for raising walls and constructing habitations. Stone is almost unknown. The only tree which grows naturally is the date-palm, which, indeed,

is more abundant and flourishes better in the lower regions of the Tigris and Euphrates than in any other part of the world. But the palm, although it can be used for making roofs, is almost useless for the construction of walls. In consequence, therefore, of this state of things, the Babylonians were driven by necessity to make bricks, and to fix them together with the bitumen which the springs offered them: "They said one to another: Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

It was only, however, for the best of their buildings that the Babylonians employed burnt bricks. They generally used bricks that were simply dried in the sun, such as those which are still employed for the construction of ordinary houses by the peoples of the East. Consequently, they had two words to express the different kinds of bricks. The word for the burnt brick does not seem to be found in any other of the Semitic languages except Arabic; it survived in Mesopotamia, and was adopted by the Mahometan conquerors when they subdued that country. The Hebrews used one word for all kinds of bricks.

As we have frequently observed in former chapters, the Babylonian and Assyrian bricks were stamped with the name and titles of the king in whose reign they were manufactured: so the bricks found among the ruins of Babylon almost all bear the name of the great Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar. The side of the brick on which the name was stamped was laid down-

wards. The die used for stamping must have been of wood. The bricks are generally, from the earliest times downwards, larger than our modern bricks; and the kiln-baked bricks are of a much finer material, and much harder than those to which we are accustomed. The general size of the Babylonian bricks is about eight inches square and four inches thick. The clay was mixed with straw or chopped reeds. A layer of reeds was often laid between two layers of bricks, to give greater cohesion to the structure; and portions of these mats of reeds, as described by Herodotus, may be seen in our museums still adhering to the surface of the bricks.

As for the rude structures of unbaked bricks, they were often united together by a simple mortar of clay, and so came sometimes to form an almost homogeneous mass. This is especially seen to be the case in the basements or platforms of the palaces, which formed immense solid masses of clay, only pierced by the vaulted drains which carried away the sewage of the upper structures.

In speaking of the account of the Flood, the name Ararat naturally suggests itself. With this word, as the name of a district of Armenia, we are familiar in the cuneiform inscriptions. The country of *Urartu*, or Armenia, was invaded by many of the great conquerors, such as Sennacherib and Sardanapalus, and was reckoned among the countries that were tributary to Assyria.

When we come to the ethnological lists of Genesis,

we meet with many names that are known in the Assyrian and Babylonian literature. Media is Madai in Assyrian, as in Hebrew. Ionia, or Greece, is Javan in both languages: Sargon speaks of the Sea of Javan (the Ionian Sea, or Mediterranean), and Darius speaks of Greece as Javan in the Babylonian version of the inscriptions on his tomb and on the rock of Behistun. Cush is a name given by the Assyrians to Ethiopia; and the name of Mizraim, or Egypt, is identical in Assyrian and in Hebrew, although the latter puts it in the dual number and the former in the singular. We have spoken of the name of Canaan in the chapters on the Tell el-Amarna tablets; * before the discovery of the latter documents the name had not been found in any cuneiform inscription, and the districts of Canaan and Western Syria were only recognised under another name—that of “land of the Amorites,” † as it may now be rendered. The name of Babylon, or Babel, is identical in Hebrew and in Babylonian, in which language we also find the names of Erech, Accad, and Shinar. Nineveh, with its neighbouring cities, has already been discussed. ‡ The Philistines, or *Pilishti*, were subdued by Sennacherib and other Assyrian kings. Sidon is, of course, very frequently mentioned; its princes had constantly to send gifts or tribute to the supreme kings of Assyria. Heth, “the son of Canaan,” was the ancestor of the Hittites, or “sons of Heth”; and this nation was one of those whose territories lay nearest to the regions of Assyria, and were most frequently overrun by the armies of the

* See page 208. † See page 129. ‡ See page 334 ff.

latter country.* The Assyrian form of their name is *Khatti*, or *Hatti*. Besides the Hittites and Amorites, among the Canaanite nations we are well acquainted with the Assyrian forms of the names Arvad, Zemar, Hamath, Gaza. Among the other nations in the ethnological list, the Hebrew names of Elam and Aram are identical with those of the Assyrian and Babylonian language. Further researches will probably identify with certainty many more of the names in this interesting list.

Ur of the Chaldees, as it has been said, is identical—at least in name—with the extremely ancient city of Uru, the ruins of which are now called Mukeyyer. The historical identification depends partly on the name, partly on the geographical position in the land of the Chaldees. The name Camerina also, which, according to Eupolemus, a writer of the second century before Christ, was given to Urie—a town of Babylonia, believed by him to be the same as Ur of the Chaldees—may mean the city of the Moon-god, to whose worship, as we have seen, the ancient *Uru*, or Mukeyyer, was especially devoted. Moreover, Eupolemus adds that Urie means “city” in Babylonian, and this is not improbably the signification of the ancient name of *Uru* preserved in the cuneiform inscriptions.

The words used by the Hebrews for the rising and setting of the sun are identical with those of the Assyrians, and mean literally † the “coming out” and “going in of the sun.”

* See pp. 362, 366, etc.

† See page 415.

As we have seen,* the common formula of salutation among the Semitic nations, including the ancient Hebrews, was also that in use among the Assyrians and Babylonians.

The name of the River Nile was borrowed by the Hebrews from the Egyptians, among whom the word meant simply "the river," since it is the only river in their country. The same name was also borrowed by the Assyrians and Babylonians to designate the great river of Egypt.

The Assyrians also did as the Hebrews did in using the title given by the Egyptians to their king as if it were a proper name. "Pharaoh, King of Egypt," is the phrase used in the inscriptions of Sargon, just as it is in Genesis and Exodus. The word Pharaoh, as everyone knows, simply means the "great house" or "palace," and was a respectful way of speaking of the king himself. The Assyrian word for "palace" or "great house" seems to be used occasionally in the same way, not only in the passage from the Tell el-Amarna tablets quoted above,† where it simply translates the Egyptian title, but in passages that refer to the King of Assyria, as in that quoted above,‡ where Sammuramat is called "wife of the palace" or "great house."

The word which denotes "king" in Assyrian is not the same as that used to designate the kings of Israel and Judah. It is well known in Hebrew, however, in which language it is applied to princes, nobles, and high officials. On the other hand, the verb from which

* See page 171 f.

† See page 219.

‡ See page 424.

the Hebrew word meaning "king" is derived is frequently used in Assyrian, with the signification "to take possession of," "to rule," and the substantive in question is used to denote Syrian princes.

The meaning of the Hebrew word *degel*, "a standard," is explained by the Assyrian, which possesses a verb, *dagálu*, meaning "to look at." This verb is especially used in the common phrase, "to look to the face" of a king—that is to say, to acknowledge submission to him and to seek his favour. The standard of an army or of a tribe was, of course, intended to be the object to which all should look, that it might guide their movements in battle or on the march.

The frequent mention of blue and crimson stuffs, expressed by identical words in Hebrew and Assyrian, has already been noticed. There is another word for "variegated stuffs" used in both languages. The word occurs in the Book of Ezekiel. Our Authorised Version translates it "rich apparel." The prophet is speaking of the trade of Tyre, and mentions, among other things, the garments dyed with blue, the embroideries from Mesopotamia and Syria, and the cedar-chests bound with cords, which contained variegated stuffs of great value ready for exportation to the markets of Greece and Egypt. Such variegated stuffs were laid up among the treasures of Oriental princes, and were frequently carried off as spoil by the Assyrian invaders.

Naturally, the peculiarly Assyrian or Babylonian words borrowed by the writers of the Old Testament are found again in the cuneiform inscriptions. Such

words are "tartan," meaning "general of the troops"; "Rabshakeh," which was the title of one of the great officers; * the word *s'gānim*, which is used by Ezekiel and Jeremiah of the Babylonian governors, and transferred after the captivity to the Jewish officials.

These are a few indications of the help afforded by the Assyrian and Babylonian language to the student of Hebrew in the better understanding of the vocabulary of the latter language. The grammar affords also valuable matter of comparison. Eventually, without doubt, almost every word and grammatical form in Hebrew will be able to be compared with those of the sister language of Mesopotamia; and already that is the case with a large number of words and forms. What a mass of new material is here provided for the student of the Semitic languages, and how unexpected a resurrection of a branch of that family of speech thought to be lost for ever! It was, indeed, buried under the rubbish of ruined temples and palaces, but it was not dead; or, at least, it has been brought to life again by the labours of modern explorers and decipherers. And the monuments of this language have this special interest: that they are absolutely authentic representatives of the times in which they were written—there has been no corruption of the original texts by copyists, no alterations and misunderstandings which might leave us in doubt as to the original text—but we have here the original text itself, preserved unchanged on clay and stone through thousands of years.

* See pp. 317 and 370.

The cuneiform inscriptions show us the other side of the picture painted by the Hebrew prophets. The latter tell us of the supremacy of Assyria or Babylonia in Western Asia during the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries before Christ. Ezekiel represents Assyria as "a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature." Alluding to the great rivers of Mesopotamia, and to the network of canals which saved that country from the injurious effects of the periodical floods and ensured its prosperity, the prophet says that "the waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field." The greatness of the Assyrian Empire is typified by the growth of the cedar: "His height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him." Under this image of the

cedar overtopping all other trees, and sheltering all nations under its branches, the prophet indicates to us the impression that the Assyrian power made upon its subjects and contemporaries. The cuneiform inscriptions, on the other hand, show us how the Assyrians regarded the nations whom they subdued and plundered, the contempt which the conquerors felt for those who dared to resist their sovereign power, and their ruthless disregard of the sufferings inflicted on those from whom they chose to demand obedience and tribute. We see from the native records how the Assyrians became so great and wealthy that no other nation in Asia could be compared with them; how all the cities of Syria and Armenia were ransacked for their gold and silver and purple stuffs, which were stored in the treasuries of Nineveh; how all the tribes of Western Asia hastened to bring the heaviest tribute and to lay it at the feet of the cruel conquerors, which they kissed in token of abject submission, in order that they might save themselves from death, torture, or slavery.

When the supremacy was transferred to Babylon, at the end of the seventh century, the new dynasty carried on the policy of their Assyrian predecessors for a short period, until the Persian conquest altered the face of Western Asia, and introduced an era of comparative peace and cessation from perpetual ravage and plunder. Habakkuk speaks of the Chaldæans as "that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs." He describes them as "terrible and dreadful";

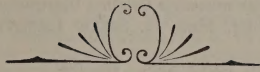
“their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every stronghold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.” This is the aspect which the armies of Nebuchadnezzar presented to his enemies, for whose overthrow he thanks his gods, who had made him ruler over the whole world, and filled his treasury with the spoils of all nations.

It is hardly too much to say that the history of Western Asia, from the eleventh or twelfth century before Christ down to the sixth, is the history of Assyria and Babylonia. Armenia, Syria, and parts of Asia Minor were tributary to them during a great part of that period, and the influence which these great nations exercised upon the civilization of the surrounding countries can hardly be exaggerated. These considerations show of what importance the study of the cuneiform inscriptions must be for the understanding of the history of the people of Israel. The material culture of the Israelites must have been, in great measure, borrowed from the example of the ruling nation, and the greater wealth and more extensive commerce of Nineveh and Babylon must have enabled them to impose their modes of life upon their less important neighbours.

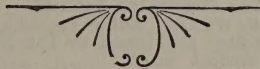
This conclusion is strengthened when we consider the antiquity of the influence exercised by the States of Mesopotamia upon the neighbouring lands, and especially upon Syria. We have seen that between the twelfth and sixth centuries this supremacy was almost uninterrupted; but at a much earlier period it had already existed. It is true that this earlier period was separated from the later by an age of Egyptian supremacy under the eighteenth dynasty, followed by a period during which the Hittites and Amorites were left to themselves; but the earlier period, beginning with the conquests of Sargon of Agade in Phœnicia, must have left ineffaceable traces behind. As we have seen from a study of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, this earlier period of Babylonian supremacy left behind it the use of the Babylonian language and system of writing in Syria and Canaan, as well as in countries further east, and perhaps further north, which came within the range of early Babylonian civilization. The connection of the Babylonian supremacy in those remote days with the emigration of Abraham and his family from the Babylonian city of Ur into Canaan cannot, indeed, be traced at present; but it is certainly important to know from the Babylonian records that, probably before the time of Abraham, Syria and Canaan had been conquered by the Babylonian princes: had been influenced by the culture of Babylonia so far that they had borrowed its language for literary purposes and its system of writing; and not improbably had formed part of a Babylonian empire, just as they did in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

But, after all, this close connection between Canaan and Mesopotamia, both in earlier and in later times, only accentuates more strongly the independent character of the religious literature and the religious practice of the Jews. How much more marvellous does the Old Testament become when it is clearly understood that it was written by members of a small nation or tribe, under the overshadowing influence of the supreme power of Assyria or Babylonia! The surrounding nations, doubtless, had their own local gods; but most of these were the same as those of Babylonia, and were probably worshipped with similar rites. Baal, or Bel, Ishtar, or Ashtoreth, Rimmon, Dagon, Tammuz, are gods common to the Semitic races of Western Asia, and these were the principal deities of the nations around Samaria and Judah. It is true, indeed, that the Israelites and many of the Jews adopted these worship; but the priests and prophets of Jehovah kept up a different form of faith; and the thought that Isaiah and Ezekiel preached and wrote, not only in the face of their apostate countrymen, but in spite of the political supremacy and overshadowing culture of Nineveh and Babylon, adds to the deep impression produced by the study of their books.

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